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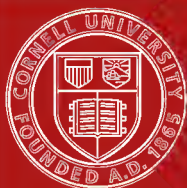
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**STUDIES IN THE  
PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMAN**



# Studies in the Psychology of Woman

BY  
LAURA MARHOLM

TRANSLATED BY  
GEORGIA A. ETCHISON



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## PREFACE

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This is the first attempt at a Psychological Study of Woman which has been laid before the public by a woman. That such a work is undertaken from the feminine side might of itself be well taken as a contribution to the psychology of woman, and will doubtless, by earnest and competent critics, be so considered.

In this volume, which took shape under the hindrances and disturbances which surround women in the struggle for existence, I have, above all, sought to grasp those points of view and facts which are affected by the social position of woman in the present and most recent past. I have depicted woman as her nature and ideas were formed and must have been formed during the later centuries, and shown why she has arrived at the place where, to the astonishment of many and the satisfaction of a few, she now stands. I have thrown as much light as possible upon her activity

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in the most varied social positions, her personal efforts and her general character; have brought forward the points where her best womanhood and her deepest insufficiency lie. And in doing so I found a thread running along from the great upheaval of the Reformation to the present day, and I followed it and have seen everywhere the inner changes in the woman dependent upon the outer conditions.

If we wish to understand woman, it is not alone sufficient to study the Protestant woman and the freethinking woman in her inner and outer preliminary conditions, as has heretofore been done almost exclusively, for both of these are in a certain sense detached. The thought development of the time has carried them along too quickly and torn them out of their roots. The Catholic woman still possesses to-day the connection with nature and the power of emotional expansion, both of which are indispensable to the woman. A psychology of the woman without inclusion of the Catholic element would be incomplete; it would even be founded upon a false basis.

In this volume I have studied woman

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and her functions from the standpoint of the social conditions. There is still another direction of research, for which I have here tried to create the preliminary conditions,—that of purely sexual psychology. In this I hope to succeed at some later time.

LAURA MARHOLM.

*Cline Johnson -*  
*- Woman and the World -*



## PART ONE





# STUDIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMAN

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## I—INTRODUCTION

She sat upon her handsome puffed divan, surrounded by many soft embroidered cushions, busily engaged in embroidering one more. Before her, on a table, stood the lamp adorned with a pink shade, and underneath lay books, magazines, colored wools and the pattern of her embroidery. Behind the red glass door of a pretty majolica stove, burning logs crackled and snapped and the long red flames played at hide and seek.

Her hair was blond and her face rosy,—or was the warm tint only the double reflection from the fire and pink lampshade? As blond and as rosy, with head bowed as gracefully over embroidery, by the same lamp and beside the same table, sat the same slender figure in the portrait which hung upon the wall above, framed

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMAN

in gay colored Italian scarfs and dried palm leaves.

The portrait was by a well-known artist, and the interior depicted was as rich, as peaceful, and as clearly stamped with the atmosphere of comfort and affluence as was the room about the living lady; but the taste of the early seventies displayed in its style of furniture, pattern of carpet, and paintings by famous artists of that day, seemed more appropriate to her and less conspicuous. The whole arrangement of the room belonged to that period to which belonged also the lady's youth; and as she now looked up at the young man who sat opposite, observing her with respectful admiration, her smile, the play of her features and her modest manner were survivals of that time of honeyed womanliness. The young man talked of the tendency towards religious criticism in the present time, and the lady made obligatory responses in her quiet, soft voice, now and then throwing in a subtle remark as she stitched away at her cushion.

Through the adjoining room, with its more modern arrangements of draped easy-chairs, stools and lounges, came the

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meager, quiet, wandering figure of the lady's learned brother. He walked up and down in the parlor for a while, silent and aimless, looking at the trifles on the tables, then muttered something to the young man and took him into his study.

She sat there, blond and rosy, with her unvarying, soft, half-smiling expression, and embroidered on industriously. I lay in my low arm chair and looked at her, at her portrait, at the elegant room, and now and then turned my eyes towards the window where evening was closing in,—the chilly evening which did not look inviting and which made me wish to linger.

"Tell me," I asked, simply for the sake of saying something, "does that really give you pleasure, — stitching flowers and vines on cloth and velvet?"

"Pleasure?" she raised her eyes and the soft smile was a little bitter. "Of course, —the greatest pleasure. Do you see the portière before the dining room door with the transylvania pattern? I embroidered all of that; and the window curtains, and the sofa covers; when this cushion is finished, then come the draperies for the door of the corner

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salon. Then for the Spring Exhibition I am to work a wall tapestry in order. The director of the Industrial Museum has already suggested a prize for it, as my chestnut branch on which I have embroidered the flowers has attracted so much attention at the Exhibition. How can you ask? Such a satisfying activity! My name will be put on undying in the catalogue of industrial art,—the discoverer of a new female embroidery, truly feminine, means of living, imitating flowers, leaves and stems in high relief, with a new stitch, upon cloth. With this consciousness I can solace myself in old age."

She laughed a short laugh, threw her trumpery work aside and arose.

"Come, let us look out of the window," she said, "that is so amusing and so respectable. We can look at what we are doing. Don't you find that a fitting aim in life, pleasing to God and to man?"

We stood at the window, she, tall and strong and slender, dressed with quick grace, her blond hair drawn to the back of her head and piled up at the back in braids which were not quite all her own, her thin lips parting carefully over

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which were not quite all real,—looking faded and gray in the trying gray evening light;—old, old, a correct old maid.

“Why do you look at me so, my dear?” she asked, with a distrustful side glance. “You have not much more time either. No, there is still time for you,” she added good-naturedly,—“but make use of it, make use of it!”

“Yes; but how?”

“Of course that is only a way of talking. It will be with you as with me; you are made for it. And what do we lack,—we old maids? Have I not everything? Do I not still look pretty by lamplight? What if everybody in this dear town where I was born knows how old I am? Have I not suitors? Look at the youth who is now sitting with my brother,—with how much love he gazes on me. He desires nothing better than to be allowed to accompany me to the Philharmonic concerts and the cycle lectures; he would do anything for me, except marry me. And at our great family dinners, am I not the central point of the conversation? Am I not always an object for the addresses of the table cavaliers,—

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMAN

a bright girl like me who knows how to talk much and well and gives her companion a chance to enjoy his dinner undisturbed? At the balls, don't I draw the dancers away from the young girls? Aren't they so fond of talking with me that they sometimes even forget their little partners?"

She had remained standing at the window with the evening light falling upon her faded features.

"When I survey my life should I not be satisfied? Respected, loved, sought after as member of committees in all the raffles and charity bazaars, indispensable to my poor, clumsy brother, a good daughter, a comfort to my parents while they lived; do I not also belong to a highly distinguished family, a family whose name has a place in the literature and art of our country? / Have I not an unspotted reputation, a clear conscience and an immaculate past? / Why do you look at me so maliciously, dear girl,—isn't that enough for a perfect lady?"

She held my hand a moment, then left the window, walked up and down the room a few times, and finally lay down upon a sofa in a dark corner.

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"I have also been loved," she continued, "at any rate, poems have been written about me. I could have married, —a widower with four children, considered a match, or a polite scholar, an influential literary dilettante in fact, who was only slightly bald. At that time I was still young and pretty and fresh, and I waited for something very different. And then the time went by. You know how time flies. It seems to go slowly and you feel there is so much ahead; you are healthy and young and in no hurry; but one morning you awake and are no longer young. One scorns to race for a prize! How I shrink within myself at the thought! My awakening came just as my parents became invalids and were constantly journeying. My dear parents absorbed me, with the untroubled consciences of loving parents, —and when I had finally laid them to rest, then—it was too late."

She changed her position and complained of backache.

There was a silence—a dreary silence. A clock struck. It was late for me and I rose to take leave. The elderly girl upon the sofa sat up suddenly and seized

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my hand. "No, stay a little longer. I like you so much. You are so fresh. These lonely evenings are so dismal for me. Always, always alone! And these dreadful nights! Do you understand? How does my brother endure it—a man! Evening after evening we sit here, these long, long evenings, he with his cuneiform inscriptions, which do no one any good, I with my high-relief embroidery, which is equally useless; day after day the same stupid, aimless pursuits, the same stupid affectation of industry.

"And then when spring comes there is so much to be done. All this lovely frippery to be beaten out and put into camphor that the moths may not destroy it;—but the moths go on devouring us, our youth, our freshness, all our thousand patient woman-hopes, year in and year out they eat them in the living body. And when we cannot stand it any longer, and summer comes—then we travel. Ah, it is such a pleasure to travel! Only think—Italy and Switzerland and Stubbenkammer by electric light! And the Venus of Milo and the Sistine Madonna—those everlasting types of the womanly. What elevation! What



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joys for body and soul! The felicity, too, of one's own chaste maidenhood and these ideal friendships with men of intellectual renown! Oh, my dear, believe me, I have had everything high and beautiful that life can give; I have seen the wonders of art and nature in Europe, Africa, and Asia, have associated with the best people of my time at dinners and suppers, have stood before the masterpieces of living and dead artists, have known Platonic love,—oh, why doesn't some one shout aloud the whole stupid, absurd lie of such a life?

"I have not been unhappy. No, I have certainly lived in the most fortunate surroundings; but I have been deceived by my loving parents, by my dear teachers, by my good friends, by my worshiping admirers. Why is there such a conspiracy on the part of those who know? Why do they all unite to defraud the girl of her life? Can you tell me why she is required her whole life long to live upon substitutes for happiness, and go to wreck on them? Do you understand it? I cannot. But if it could only once be told to the world. A woman must say it. Let me tell you what I think!"

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMAN

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She sat up straight on the sofa with trembling lips and held my hand in her moist fingers.

"*You* are the one to say it. Sit down and write it out—write it for us all. You can do it, for you can write. I have tried it many times, but it always comes to nothing. It is always in the same commonplace words; but you have so many new expressions, you can say with perfect calmness things which make our flesh creep. You must say this. Tell it in such a way that the men also will pay attention. I cannot do it; when it comes to the point I am afraid. How could I look my brother and my relatives in the face afterwards? But you—listen! I will be your fellow-worker."

I let her detain me against my will. This suggestion did not appeal to me in the least. It had an unpleasant resemblance to the attempts of a prominent woman whose unfortunate marriage had led her also to rebellious thoughts. They resulted, however, in nothing at all to the point, but all turned upon Katherine II. of Russia, and her canonization. I was to execute the onerous task according to my companion's

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exact intentions, and she, so long as I was occupied with this useful work, would move about with me through the largest hotels in all the historical places in Europe, in order properly to stimulate me. Discouraged by the contemplation of this plan, I now prepared to release my hand and escape.

Just then we heard the bell ring and the maid entered to announce some one. My companion pressed me hastily back upon the sofa and left the room. Soon after I saw through the open door, in the dusky dining room, the figure of a small, thin, black-veiled woman, who talked almost inaudibly to the elderly "young lady," with gestures of dissent, apparently keeping me in view meanwhile. The "young lady" speedily returned, closing the dining room door behind her.

"Do stay," she urged in a low tone; "the old specter may amuse herself in there alone. She will not see you because you have not visited her, although you must know through me that she is here. You have not written anything about her, which she thinks very unkind, for she was the first woman who brought up the ques-

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tion of the emancipation of woman and therefore deserves your gratitude as a woman and your interest as a writer. But you have no party spirit!"

The lady spoken of was Camilla Collet, one of the oldest "Woman's Rights" women in Europe, who died but lately at the age of eighty. If she had not written in the language of a few millions of people only, and for a little land like Norway, she would have rested on her laurels in her old age, and given ceremonious audiences, instead of wandering about in strange cities, unknown, shy and embittered, or sitting in the back rooms of her acquaintances.

Yet she had lived, both as woman and author, a rich life. Her book, "The Magistrate's Daughter," which was the first bugle-call from the "camp of the dumb," had given Ibsen the impetus to that great literature on the position of woman, by which he stepped into the foreground of literary and ethical interest throughout England. Sister of an eminent man who appreciated and encouraged her, well married, mother of vigorous sons and daughters; sought and honored as an intelligent woman; friend

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and correspondent for many years of the leading men of her nation; the youthful love of one of these men; she had possessed in her full and eventful life all that constitutes the happiness of woman,—according to the general conception of large or small minds. First, the romantic love of her youthful days, then an active married life, good children, honor and recognition, the satisfaction of inspiring great men, and a fruitful posterity of highly respected citizens, among whom she might have passed a cherished and contented old age.

Instead, she wandered like a lost spirit from one acquaintance to another, unsocial, solitary, perplexed; seeking; always seeking for an unknown, lost, youthful happiness, to which she gave fantastical names and shapes,—seeking it in her old yellowed letters, in her misty relation to the strong clever genius, long since dead; embittered, lonely, revolving in a circle about her own shrunken ego; tenacious, careworn, a strange contradiction of all the richness of her experience.

The young man was now ushered in again by the learned brother. He seated

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himself once more opposite the lady, under the lamp, and they philosophized this time about contentment. The young man took it for granted that the lady had always been, was, and always would be contented. She, blond and rosy under the pink shade, smiled and had nothing to say in contradiction; and while with discreet insinuation he spoke of the inner conflicts and outer hardships of the impecunious academical lecturer on Church history, his eyes looked fondly and boldly into hers, and her eyes fastened stealthily upon his, imbibing with shy coquetry his glance.

The "old specter" in the next room was not forgotten meanwhile. The young lady related in a half whisper the history of her life as wife and author, and illustrated it with quotations from the books of "this famous and happy writer," which lay in complete edition upon an old German side-table, ready at hand for visits. And as her gaze fastened more and more openly upon the young man's, the talk drifted to the dissatisfactions of married and unmarried life, and lost itself beneath sweet languishing glances in a general pessimism.

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I rose and took leave. I went through the streets in the still evening and heard in my ears the distressed cry of unhappy woman, again and again sent forth from the "cultured womanliness" of the "perfect lady"—that cry of distress which I now for the first time heard and comprehended, and whose one original note I have since then heard ring through our "highly developed" cultured society in a thousand shrill, impure and false tones, piercing through manifold coverings, disguises and distortions,—a concert of bad, untuned and broken instruments, and in the midst one single, pure, long, complaining, alluring tone.





## II—THREE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN

The ocean lay large and blue and calm, breathing coolness upon the land; a light wind blew freshly; the silver-beeches stood still under their waving crowns, their leaves exhaling a sweet fragrance; a salt smell came from the sea, and the long yellow line of cliffs rested the eye. The guests of the bathing resort lay quietly about the beach in easy comfort under the sunny sky, and for a little while all strain and restraint seemed dissolved in the pleasure of merely vegetating.

Suddenly a sharp feminine laugh came sounding up from the beach, then a buzz of women's voices, then a ceaseless concert of laughter. I sat up and looked over the cliff. Below were my neighbors of the hotel where I had taken my abode, hard at work in a very singular occupation. Half a dozen ladies assisted a young wife to bury her husband in the sand. The man, apparently phlegmatic of temperament and in the prime of life,

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lay patiently upon his back like a statue, a sand-heap under his head; while the newly-wedded wife, brown, thin and shriveled, with the coiffure of a school-mistress and the gaze of a street gamin, worked hardest of all, breathless and panting with eagerness, at his interment. With hands and feet and spades a hill was scraped and shoveled over him; the man vanished; only the points of his toes and his nose still showed. When he lay so fixed that he could not move, the wife jumped up, caught the hand of a twenty-year-old youth who had stood pensively by, and sprang with him across the mock grave and back, amid jubilant shouts; the others standing about accompanied the symbolical act with silly laughter.

All at once, by some reflex association beneath the threshold of consciousness, the "old specter," the renowned creator of the question of "Woman's Emancipation" in the North, stood visibly there below near this strange new wife; the figures of that very intellectual woman and of this very ordinary, narrow-minded teacher-wife blended for a moment into one, and it wore an expression of aversion—of sharp aversion for the man. What

### THREE GENERATIONS

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was it that had driven the newly-married woman, usually so ostensibly tender, whose husband showed honest affection for her,—and that other beloved wife and mother, to turn with nagging discontent and suppressed anger against the men who allowed themselves to be made happy by them and hung upon them without reserve? Why from their full table did both grasp for something more? Why were they not happy in their happiness?

I turned the leaves of the books out of which the "woman-question" grew, in which, in the more personal places, a perverse yearning rings out; and I turned the leaves in the trivial soul of this no longer "young wife" who, with feigned frankness, constantly went about with the young men and loaned her husband to others, and I asked myself—"Why so unsatisfied at the full board?"

Gradually, as I sat there on the cliff and looked out across the unending, still, shining blue, till heaven and ocean became one, all merged in a rosy violet light,—with the mirth of the mock-burial ringing up from below, there rose before me that autumn scene in another land

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and city, far from this strip of coast;—the aging aristocratic maiden in her wealthy home, and beside her the “old specter,” slight, meager and black-veiled, whom I myself had never seen except haunting corridors and vanishing in back rooms,—both ladies from that height of society in which “moral refinement” has already continued through some generations; and I heard the restless, complaining murmur of the one and the stifled, woeful cry of the other,—“If only some one would tell what we suffer!”

From below still resounded the hard, unpleasant laughter of the wife springing over her buried husband, and all at once the ocean and coasts vanished, the sky grew dark and the sand dunes black, and I saw nothing save an endless throng of women, young, old and of uncertain age, fresh and withered, women like men in women’s clothing, and women with all womanly loveliness, women-children and matrons, and mothers, mothers with their daughters, friendly, decrepit grandmothers and childless vampires; and it was no hallucination; they were all genuine women among whom I, a woman,

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had grown up; they had sat upon the school bench with me, they had reared and taught me, chastised and petted me, loved and oppressed me,—all the mothers, aunts and relatives, with their following of feminine domestics,—the whole passing and past generation, all staring with strange, bitter, suffering faces and longing eyes.

After them there pressed the countless numbers of those I had met upon the path of mature life, who had crossed my way or with whom I had walked a little distance; the woman friends and acquaintances, the patronesses and petitioners of all the various ranks above and below me, the indifferent people who had brushed past me, the competitors and parasites who lived by snatching, the betrayers and betrayed of my life, my generation, most of them limp, tired, dragging behind them their better halves; with anæmic children and corpulent husbands; some moving like lizards spying and seeking; others with pastoral serenity and broad, smiling faces; women, and eternal virgins and sirens. Already another throng crowds these away,—the young brood which has just learned to

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fly; pale and rosy charmers with alluring, anxious eyes; a half-knowledge in their gaze, a restless, disappointed mien; exhausted daughters of dissatisfied parents; delicate, empty faces or puffy, cod-liver-oil cheeks; laced and macadamized creatures; many, many trained articles of luxury, but rarely a real woman for the real man.

And there come more, still more, mixtures and hybrids,—and not one unknown face, not one strange apparition. For I have seen them all, spoken with them all, and read them, as man never sees nor speaks with nor reads them;—as only a woman can understand a woman. Woman looks at woman with a glance of free-masonry; she lets another read the secret language of her inner being,—that language which the wise and the stupid alike speak, which the learned and the unlearned alike comprehend; that language before which the wise and the stupid man, the learned and the unlearned,—everything that is man, always stands with the same bewildered expression. I know them all,—these women, and their histories; those which have been related to me, those which

### THREE GENERATIONS

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have not been related to me, and those which have been related to me falsely; for I am a woman like these and a daughter of the same period.

The crowd of familiar faces grew and surged about me, a throng of four or five generations and as many nationalities,—Russian and Scandinavian, French, German and Jewish; and out of the multitude a few here and there stood out clearly, those who had differentiated themselves from the mass, the women who felt and suffered, conscious of themselves as women and who as women wished to live,—the first forerunners of the coming age. And these cried to me:

“Speak!—tell what we have said to you! Speak for us because we have talked to you unreservedly and truthfully. Tell why we suffer and die!”

I lay upon the sandy slope under the shady, waving beeches, and the afternoon sun glistened on the first foam-caps across the green-blue sea. I lay there and it was good. And because for me all was good, something arose out of me, separated itself from my being and became concrete; something stood before me as a palpable, tangible, graspable substance,

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which usually only moves and swells dimly, deep down in the human heart, but which now gathered its millions of separated particles together as a whole, a broad black cloud which lay over the whole earth and drew up out of the hearts of men its gray spiderweb mists,—Discontent.

The swarm of women from various lands and circles and classes vanished from my thoughts into the distance; mothers and grandmothers, daughters, wives and sweethearts, young and old maidens,—they were alike unsatisfied women. Not one had found what she sought, or if she had found it, it tasted bitter. Many called themselves happy but at the same time chased around the world as if possessed and could compose themselves to nothing; others mourned their dead husbands and cultivated an extensive worship of the dead, but as widows bloomed into a comfortable brightness never seen in them before. The independent, self-supporting maidens called themselves fortunate, but at the same time lost early their youth and brightness. Wherever one looked in civilized lands and “cultured classes”—



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dissatisfaction with man and dissatisfaction without man!

Whence came this? Was it merely a reflection of the restless hurrying, seeking and pursuing which afflicts man in this closing century? Was it simply the joylessness which so stamps the life of our time, imprinted upon the sensitive, imitative soul of woman even more strongly than upon that of man? Was it only the rheumatic twinges, the nervous tension and irritation by which the great Epoch of Change marks its outbreak? Was it the same passion for life without the life vigor, the same pursuit of pleasure without pleasure, the same desire for enjoyment without the ability to enjoy, which make our festivals so impersonal, our society so empty, our intercourse so tiresome? Or was it something else,—something at the same time more or less than these, something essentially feminine,—a discontent differing from the discontent of man, arising from another organic basis than his?

Was it something that had formed itself out of woman's nature and grown like a misshapen foetus, born of the female organism? Was it not something, per-

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMAN

haps, that had not been in woman formerly and probably would not be in her later,—something which she must throw off, like the depression of spirits and impurities of the skin in disease?

Whence does it come, this hesitating eagerness, this secret aversion of woman for man, this displeasure of the woman in her sex, this desire to be above and beyond her sex, with which the woman of our day coquets? Whence come her coldness in pleasure and her passion in renunciation? Whence the nervous diseases, soul-sickness, mental disorders, and all the hysterical outbursts of dissatisfaction which prey upon the woman of our day? Why is her charm for man and her power over man so weak and uncertain? Why are her births so hard and her children so often feeble, while all sanitary conditions and the opportunities for prolonging life are so much better than ever before? Why are marriages now so joyless, why is love now so lame of wing? Why are women so much more cowardly than formerly in their sexual life, and “young ladies” more stupid than ever? Why?

Still another question: why is all this

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so much more evident in Protestant lands than in Catholic countries?—and why is it precisely in the centers of our highest civilization that people can neither live nor die?

There is yet something more,—a deeper, painfuller malady, a growth—illness of the race; the trees grow, but the leaves fall and dry up or decay. Why should the tree concern itself about its fallen, withered and decayed leaves?

Hence the secret despair in the still closet; the loosened seal from woman's lips, and the dawn of a new consciousness, woman's awakening consciousness of herself as woman, of her woman nature.

For the moment the sexes are more distinct, live in more widely separated spheres, think more differently upon all matters which concern them mutually, than ever before. "Woman thinks stupidly about men, and man thinks coarsely about women," as Arne Garborg expresses it.

Woman, who is the one more imperiled, has attempted to rescue herself from her blind lane by her own efforts. It is the attempt of the "intellectual woman;"

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emancipation of woman is the form it takes. After having devastated the North the movement is now sweeping over Germany. But the emancipation of woman is nothing but woman's despair of herself as woman.

For in nothing can woman be like man; her development tends more and more to unlikeness in ways ever more delicate and manifold. In her very dissimilarity lie her charm for man and her own happiness. The woman of the present, however, has no longer the coarse-grained completeness of her grandmother and great-grandmother, nor has she yet the finished basis of a fortunate differentiation. Woman has become but half-woman, and this most absurd of all intermediate stages, we seek by all accepted means, educational and moral, in the home and school, to maintain and make permanent.

↙ The woman of our day has no longer respect for man, no longer respect for herself as a productive organism; in other words, she has no veneration for the mystery of her existence. She is stupidly wise—unnatural. At most the woman of to-day has only fear of man.

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Our grandmothers also stood in fear of man, but they feared him and submitted to him as one does to Providence. The modern woman when she fears man, fears in him only the individual brutal being with whom she is unfortunately thrown, who can maltreat her, in his greater strength, if he chooses, and against whom she feels herself defenseless; she always fears in man one individual common boor; and the war against man which the emancipation movement leads, is also simply a struggle against an accidental row of cruel fellows, who in the narrow minds of a number of embittered women have swelled to the dimensions of the whole masculine sex.

Yet in precisely these qualities, brutality, coarseness and overbearingness, natural or assumed, consists man's sole attraction for many of the cultured women of to-day, as well as for the ordinary woman. Herein is the mistake into which so many of our women, high and low, married and single, fall; and when they lie in the beds of their own making, then the "horrid man" is held to blame, not their own blunted instinct.

This stupid fear and unnatural pleasure

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in the possibility of being mishandled, in which the woman feels herself an individual opposed to another individual, is the precise opposite of what our grandmothers and the long row of their predecessors felt towards their husbands. The wife till the close of the last century, and even later, thought of her husband not at all as a certain limited personality but as "the man." Instead of addressing him as nowadays by his baptismal name or by a pet name, she—and our mothers still frequently do the same—spoke to or of him by his family or clan name, or simply with the idea of species as "my man." So likewise with her feeling towards him; the wife had not yet thought of her husband as something which belonged to her, but rather as something to which she belonged, as sex, as species, as mystery, as distance, as that which one does not understand and before which one must bow.

For life with our grandmothers was not a game of chance, an arithmetical problem, a probably unfortunate experiment, as it is now with our men and youths and so in consequence also with our women and girls. It was to them a mystery

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which they reverently accepted. In nothing is this contrast more strongly shown than in the attitude of our grandmothers towards conception, pregnancy and birth, and that of the women of to-day. I can still remember,—it is indeed one of my earliest deep impressions,—with what calm, religious care the elders always surrounded their daughters at such a time. No grumbling, no moods, no opposition. Since life was a divine ordinance, so was the husband, such as he might be, of God's sending. So was everything pertaining to woman's mission especially and in the highest degree of Providence, to be accepted as it came; for there is no jesting with Providence and things might always have been "so much worse." Woman performed her daily work, admonished her daughters, watched by the neighbors' sickbed, rendered assistance in the hour of trial, and swaddled the new-born, with a collected demeanor of mixed humility and pride, as if she were discharging a holy duty.

With the same respect did she treat the unavoidable and necessary circumstance that the husband should visit his wife; that "was as it should be," and was the

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"wife's duty," which must be fulfilled without grumbling, but also without unbecoming exultation. Her own sensuousness had probably in most cases no stronger consciousness than this, of the personality of her partner. For her it did not depend so much upon a particular individual; it was enough that he was man and her husband; for the rest, matters were transacted, as with all matrimonial mysteries, in darkness. The heavy draw-curtains of the old-time marriage-beds—each bed massive and shut in like a small fortress—played assuredly something more than a symbolic rôle.

What a contrast do we see in the daughters of these women, our mothers! As yet, no revolt, but already an unpleasant state of malaise; a very frequent and general disinclination to the fulfilment of the "conjugal duties"; contentiousness and demands during pregnancy; pleasure in torturing themselves and their husbands with a nourished fear of the birth, with which the growing daughters are consciously inoculated; a distrustful guarding of the "position of the wife" and the control of the house;—in



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short, ill-tempered virtue. These women demand of their husbands respect for the praiseworthiness of their performance of duty; they instil with lasting persistence the somewhat difficult idea that they are really disguised martyrs whose natural humility alone forbids them to exact all their dues. Their favorite word is self-sacrifice. They sacrifice themselves for their husbands; they sacrifice themselves for their children; they sacrifice themselves for the household; they sacrifice themselves for the position of the family in society; their life is one great sacrificial ceremony.

For so much self-sacrifice, however, they demand strict devotion from husband and children, and admiration as "an exemplary wife and mother." They allow themselves nothing, but they also allow their conjugal slaves nothing. Income and expenditure are under their just control, and if the husband drinks a cup beyond his thirst, he is so well trained that he is immediately assailed by clamorous scruples. These wives are no pleasure to their husbands, but then they are not there for pleasure. In all that they do they "fulfil their duty," there-

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fore they have a right to require strict performance of duty from their husbands. They keep their marital fidelity shining bright like their kitchen utensils and hence are enabled to see every flaw breathed upon it,—such as a light-minded glance of the husband at a young face,—nor do they allow the tarnish to pass uncensured. As they become older they make much ado over their illnesses and pains, the consequence of their “self-denial,” and it is peculiarly characteristic that the older and less charming they grow, the more submissive and attentive is the husband. As a rule they outlive him and extend their sway and ample collection of “duties” and “rights” over their sons and daughters, whose married happiness they do not promote but if they die before him, of cancer, diabetes, dropsy or some other illness acquired through self-sacrifice, the bereft widower mourns, misses and praises his wife the rest of his days, the sons rave about their mother and hold her up to their wives as a model, and the daughter becomes “old maids.”

Of course these types are not confined to the given periods. In the so-called

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lower classes and in the remote little towns, there are still many of the youngest generation who are like our grandmothers, but this uniformly passes where literature for women is introduced, and the characteristics of our mothers are now very common in the young women of the higher circles in provincial towns, and among the bureaucracy. The old attitude is limited chiefly to backward and narrow-minded ranks of society. In general one may say that between the generation which married in the fifties and that which married in the eighties a sharp line of division can be drawn. Our mothers held the categorical imperative in high honor; the daughters of our generation have already a touch of anarchism, they honor arbitrariness.



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And the women of to-day? The women who are now in their prime; the women at the two great turning-points of woman's life,—the woman of thirty and the woman of forty years; the woman in whom, but a short time before, that great musical symphony of love was first intoned, and the woman of forty, in whom this music rises once more like a foaming cascade and then slowly sinks and ebbs and dies away?

To comprehend the woman of to-day in her typical and at the same time most perfect development, to grasp her in the most prominent phases of her existence, to read the secrets of her inner and concealed experience, to observe the pulsation of her blood and the vibrations of her soul, to watch the activity of her organs behind the rigorous corset of convention and training, to see how her personality gradually outgrows and bursts this corset, and how the individual demands break the thread of society's

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puppet-play, and the woman bursts forth from the lady,—that were worth our pains! But where is this figure which daily goes about among us, which openly speaks a language for all ears, plainly, so that all may understand who are interested enough to listen? Where is the type which comprises all the thousand variations and offshoots, in one powerful, collective, comprehensible figure?

I do not here consider those women who have fallen from the fortifications of society's great citadel and live upon a lower plane,—the fallen, the erring, the led astray, or whatever one may term them; that mass of wantonness and duped simplicity does not concern us now. I refer to those women whose honor is without stain, whose reputation is untouched by slander; to those who are born "ladies" in the best sense of the word, with all the sensitive pride and certain distinction of the lady who has inherited generations of culture in bearing and action; to those women who have not only natural tact but natural intelligence in avoiding everything brusque, unpleasant or striking. If we could but

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read the inner history of these women we should reach the central truth concerning the woman of to-day, could environ her past and future, her height and depth, beholding her in all gradations, modifications and transitions.

But how read this hidden writing?—how open these concealed and locked chambers?

Woman leads a life of concealment. Her whole education is nothing but a concealment of the woman from herself. The mother hides from her little daughter the girl within the child; the school hides from the growing girl the woman within the maiden. Formerly maidenhood was considered a mystery; now it is a mystification. Formerly the girl growing to woman's estate knew everything which she could understand, and her own maidenhood set very clearly the limits of this understanding. In this day of benevolent humanity and saving education she must, of all things, know the least of that which she instinctively understands; the great human and educational problem of all girls' schools is the rearing of women to sexlessness. Even in the beginning of this century women ac-

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cepted what was natural, without affectation; while nowadays the means of preserving maidenly innocence is to ignore everything in any way connected with sex. Throughout Europe the classics are castrated before they are admitted into girls' schools, and even the Word of God is served up to the blooming, blossoming maiden in carefully "expurgated" editions.

Thus the lady grows up in our society. And under these influences two types are formed.

One is the outgrowth of a morbid curiosity, artificially developed by this stupid concealment and repression, which in the children of our great cities usually becomes quite early an inflamed desire. The representative of this type flutters covetously from man to man, unable to settle to rest beside any one of them; finds nothing but disappointment in the final satisfaction of her wants, undervalues her husband, converts marriage into a torture, and—strange as it may seem—in spite of her eternal circling about it, rarely comprehends the physical basis of the relation between man and woman or enjoys spontaneously the relation itself. This is the type which the



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French characterize by the untranslatable and irreplaceable word, *une détraquée*.\*

The maiden of the other type carries in her blood an over-sensitive chastity-barometer. There is a very large group of women,—and I have observed that they are usually the finest minds and noblest souls,—who instinctively guard, with fear and trembling, their inviolability; nothing is to them so distressing, so debasing, as to feel a stain upon themselves. And they feel themselves stained by everything imaginable; by the glance of a man to whom they are utterly indifferent; by a thought which flashes through their brains upon some ordinary suggestion, and whose trace they seek scrupulously to wash away from their souls as they wash a contaminating hand-pressure with soap and water from their hands. In many cases this super-sensitiveness is nothing but unrestrained maidenliness; the woman jealously reserves her entire capital, for the great bliss of an individualized, self-abandoning love for the one man destined for her. These are generally women who have an instinctive pride in their worth, and

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\* Disordered, unbalanced.

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an instinctive delicacy in the deeper phases of love; women of rich, beautiful blood, which longs to gather itself for loving germination of healthy children. These are the natures which play for high stakes. For such a woman is not for the many among men, but for the few; and it is a question whether she meet one of these few, and having met, whether he will notice her.

It does not often happen that he does notice her. The most frequent masculine types of the present are the barbarian and the decadent. The barbarian,—the un-complex, great, strong, healthy, good fellow, with the heart of a child and the nerves of a buffalo, takes note of nothing—it is his peculiar characteristic—and therefore generally tumbles into his love affairs. If he is fortunate he marries a mop, rusticates with her, and begets many children who also rusticate; but if he is unfortunate he gets caught in one of the many outstretched devil-fish arms of the *détraquée*.

The *détraquée* is altogether "the great attraction" for the man of to-day. In the race for the man she has only one rival,—the correct and formal beauty, with the

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pure line and expressionlessness of a Greek statue and the temperament of a prize cow. This rival, however, is pleasing only to the barbarian; the decadent can make nothing of her. To call his jaded manhood into activity, impressions more direct and exciting are needed than the large passive beauty can bestow.

The *détraquée* supplies all this. Her wanton curiosity, her constant longing, inflame the decadent and appeal directly to his sensuality; but her cowardice and disinclination to satisfaction drive her ever from attack to flight, and no sooner has she retreated than she stretches forth her antennæ and gropes for him again. To see man burning—that is what she lives upon; if she cannot have this atmosphere about her she becomes sallow, hollow-cheeked and hysteric. And the more localized the sensuality of the man, the more does this kind of charm work upon him. The *détraquée* is never beautiful, seldom pretty, but “she has something about her;” we call her “*piquante*” and we meet her in all assemblies and in all classes of society. Give her but the little finger and she takes, at once and often very gracefully,

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the whole hand; that is generally the whole secret of her catching the barbarian; the physiological explanation lies, nevertheless, in his localized sensuality. For the undifferentiated man still loves as our forefathers did, and reacts promptly upon the coarser and more direct excitements; while the decadent (according to the law that the most recently acquired characteristic is the first to disappear) responds no longer with his whole being, brain, soul and nervous system in an indissoluble union; for in him the highest developments of evolution are already sinking in paralysis, and he has need of importunate stimuli to stir his sluggish blood and rouse the feeling of desire.

Largely in this, I think, lies the explanation of the great unhappiness in love and marriage at the present time. Man as well as woman is in a stage of transition and has not yet attained an harmonious unity. From the old race of men, which I might call of the barbarian type, a line of inefficient and powerless differentiations detach themselves as decadents. When our attention is once called to this matter, we perceive that

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there is nothing more frequent, in our very modern life, than the union of these two types in one person,—the barbarian-decadent; the man who in his perceptive faculties has still the barbarian's lack of delicacy, but who, so far as women are concerned, reacts only upon decadent stimuli. We meet him in private and in public, and in modern literature he is typical.

The man of this unfortunate mixed type, who is not content with himself and therefore at one time reproaches woman and at another the social conditions, is so frequent among our great and small "great men" that the fortunate, fully developed individual seems not to come under consideration at all. The larger part of the literature of the day dealing with sexual problems, the struggle between the sexes, the dissatisfaction with women, the mysterious, sphinx-like characteristics of woman, has—with a very few exceptions—attained to no greater depth than the level from which the decadent, be he poet-barbarian or barbarian-poet, draws his bilious pessimism, and to which he himself is held fast by his personal limitations.

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Between the barbarian and the decadent, the two types which comprise the majority of the men of the present, the woman (or type of woman) whom I have described earlier must take her way,—the woman who has reached the highest development yet attained by woman, a dangerous distinction by which she becomes in twofold degree isolated,—first from the mass of her sex, from whom, nevertheless, she cannot withdraw herself, and secondly, from the mass of men, among whom she is destined to live and by whom her fate is decided. The woman of this type will be recognized even upon superficial observation, by her intelligence. She has not, like the *détraquée*, a sharp glance and quick judgment for trivialities only, nor the attentive artfulness with which the latter knows how to gain for herself position and unmeasured influence; she has real breadth of mind, a wisdom without cunning, an ardent but not moody temperament, the straightforwardness of pride and the sovereignty of self-reliance. These qualities, however, are as stones upon her path.

There is something of weight which

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distinguishes this type of woman, giving her the effect of being drawn in great lines, in contrast to the smallness and triviality of every day. The lazy casuality and stupid emptiness of average life become unpleasantly evident when she appears; but casuality and emptiness are the very elements of life to the decadent, and therefore he cannot get on with this type of woman. Yet he has a perpetual yearning for her; he seeks for her continually, as it is his instinct ever to seek the meeting point of the old and new refinement, but when he has found her he cannot endure to remain beside her for any length of time; he feels too keenly his own barrenness in the presence of this woman so earnest and full of concentration, and he slips away from her, angry and reproachful. Her nature also refuses to blend with that of the decadent, as if it feared to be hindered thereby in its long journey of development and to be brought to a sudden standstill.

But the barbarian, to whom this species of woman feels more strongly attracted, as to a vigorous ancestral type, hardly ever returns her interest. Whether it is for the reason that his masculine

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superiority suffers through her greater mental activity, or because of the great distance between these two unlike yet equally strong beings on the path of evolution, I do not know; in either case the mental dissatisfaction with such women outweighs for him their sexual charm and forbids that sympathy which is love. Finally, because these mental processes are so completely beneath the threshold of consciousness, they are the more liable to all sorts of checks and hindrances; the more uncertain of herself the woman is the less she is comprehended by others.

And uncertain of herself she is, and little comprehended; for this type of woman is signally a type of the future, a differentiation in its early beginnings. We see her among those strange women who are now everywhere calling loudly for "Woman's Rights;" we find her among the ladies of the educational craze in the higher circles, and in the rush of women who assail the universities; we find her as the *grande amoureuse* and as the *cérébrale*,—that increasingly numerous class, so little observed or defined.

If to the two classes which these French expressions mark (our beloved German



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is quite too plain for such subtleties) we add the class of the *détraquée*, we have some of the essential lines for the psychology of modern woman.

The *grande amoureuse* is not a differentiation of to-day. Representing a high intensification of woman-nature, she has always, from the day of Occidental culture, detached herself from time to time from the mass. She is a product of culture. She not only embodies the growing ardor of womanly devotion, but represents in the highest degree refined nature, culture which has become nature; she is in a certain sense the woman-genius,—yes, she is perhaps the only woman-genius there is. In her, all passive womanly qualities,—desire to love, devotion to man, reflective intelligence, faithfulness, solicitude, loyalty,—have, as it were, stepped from their home in the spinal cord and formed a closer communion with the brain; and her whole being is so aglow with energy that we can almost see the red blood, the essence of life itself, gleaming in her, as when we hold a woman's hand before the light.

The *grande amoureuse* has still another

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central characteristic,—she has an excellent mind. She is the flower of feminine intelligence and the moral refinement of her time; she appears as the embodiment of the highest feminine intellect. A third characteristic is the warm, full, nourishing passion which she wraps about man, fostering but not scorching, like the warmth in which the mother carries the child in her womb. There is, in the love of the *grande amoureuse*, in contrast to the parched thirst of the *détraquée*, always something of the anxious trembling of the mother for her child. It is a love without the haughtiness or the satiety of possession; a love without repletion, a love of unlimited surrender, of intellectual devotion, and of psychic enthusiasm, fully as much as of physical enjoyment; a love in which the physical is transformed without loss into vibrations of the soul; finally, a love of long duration, of joyful self-surrender to one man, without intervals of emptiness and lassitude.

That which plainly distinguishes the love of the *grande amoureuse* from that of the *détraquée* is the absence of hysteria. The *grande amoureuse* is the organism which bears with devotion, whereas the

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détraquée is the unwillingly bearing organism. The former demands content, and nourishes to greatness that which she receives from her husband and children; the latter absorbs her husband but accepts him neither spiritually nor mentally as her content.

We have still a third type, which stands in the vanguard of the phalanx of women in many places to-day. It is harder to define this type than the other two, for it is very variable, marked and yet indefinite, pronounced, yet incomprehensible; on the one hand verging towards masculinity, and on the other towards the unripeness of a clever, precocious child. It has qualities which partake of the essential characteristics of the grande amoureuse, but these very qualities develop into sexlessness. This type is the *cérébrale*.

What the *cérébrale* has in common with the grande amoureuse is the constant, regular, mental activity, by which she is distinguished as well from the *détraquée* as from the remaining, average feminine types.

Of these women I cherish the belief that they were constituted for grande amour-

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euses, but under the pressure of their surroundings and by the restraint of their natural impulses, they turn into *cérébrales*. The grounds in their own natures for this change were, firstly, a very feminine characteristic,—sharp observation; secondly, a very common feminine defect,—lack of poetical feeling.

The words which I have used—which I must use, as the only ones available to express something which is not yet clearly formulated in our minds—have certainly a double meaning. The French usually apply them exclusively to the outward manifestations of love. *La grande amoureuse* suggests not, as in olden times, boundless devotion, what Stendhal calls the “love passion”—*l’amour passion*—but the instability of love. *La cérébrale* is for them the woman who loves with her head and not with her heart, the woman whose sexual sensibility needs mental consent, who must have reasons for loving. In the word *détraquée*, they understand those who show a perverted instinct, the minute, hidden beginning of perversion. This interpretation of these words is somewhat local,—Parisian; something is breathed into

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them by use, by the disposition of the French people, which they lose as soon as they are transplanted to other soils. I must take them in their broader meaning when I attempt to catch and hold fast the main types of modern differentiation, as a basis for further research. In order to do this I must first divest them of the secondary signification which the Parisian esprit has given them.

The *cérébrale* is a very frequent type among "intellectual" women. She is the clever, cool, irreproachable wife, with an atmosphere of distinction, purity and fresh cleanliness about her. She is the young girl with the intellectual expression and frank, open, friendly features. She is the widow who, after the death of her husband, grows younger, brighter, more graceful, looks happier and yet does not take a step beyond the limits of widowhood. She is the ripe maiden with the mute glance which does not reciprocate, and lips which speak good, sensible, unprejudiced things. As mother, she is the lady who is completely engrossed with educational cares for her children, and who takes her husband into consideration chiefly as the father of

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her children and the holder of a position.

It is the *cérébrale* whom we meet in the good, clever woman, the woman of noble uprightness and directness, of calm assurance; with a glance which man fears and which rules him; with the keen judgment and intuitive insight into character at which intelligent men are prone to wonder, and upon which they are still more prone to rely;—this is the *cérébrale*. Or is it the *grande amoureuse*?

Perhaps it is also the *grande amoureuse*—the *grande amoureuse* who has never loved.

There passes through our time a wave of indignant astonishment that women no longer love. The modern woman cannot love, it is said. What is meant by this is that she cannot forget herself, cannot lose consciousness of herself, cannot surrender herself in an ecstasy, cannot subjugate herself. Woman no longer loves, they say; she thinks and she judges; she is always giving reasons; she has become critical.

Alas, it is true! Woman thinks with the apparatus which has been given her. She thinks with the spinal cord, criticises

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with her nerves, and judges by sexual perception. These are three reliable and well-adjusted weighing scales. But since the woman who becomes *cérébrale* has enjoyed a thorough and well-assimilated education, she is able to give expression to the results of her weighing in the terminology of science and learning. For one does not find the *cérébrale*, like the *détraquée*, in all classes; she is always the flower of culture; she has always a means of communication between spinal marrow and brain.

Or it may be that the brain function of woman receives its impulse from the spinal column.

The woman who loves thinks with the brain of the man she loves. I do not know whether this was so formerly, but it is so now.

The *cérébrale* is the woman who tries, as well as she can, to think with her own brain. Although she is a woman, although she has intact her instincts and sexual nature, she still tries to think with her own brain.

Why does she do this?

Because she has no man with whose brain she can think.

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Or because she deems herself above the man whom she has.

The more heterogeneous and unsettled a civilization is, the more difficult becomes the realization of love, for woman. Every civilization inculcates a definite ideal of feeling and action.

We have sought for nearly a hundred years to develop in our women a false womanliness, not only outwardly but inwardly, physically and psychically.

In consequence, love has become less and less a blind instinct to which woman yields without conditions or exactions. For the cultivated woman of to-day, love is no longer a compelling force. By her "culture" she is thoroughly saturated with all sorts of men's ideas, and has thereby imbibed something of masculine judgment and criticism of men. She has in addition her own instruments of instinct, and with these she quickly perceives which man among men stands upon the level where for her man and love become possible.

Our present relations are such that a woman is able to feel herself free "from something" only—never free to do or feel anything; and which of our men, even



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among the most advanced and refined, would allow a woman the disclosure of her whole inner being without feeling an unpleasant embarrassment? The woman who does so disclose herself seems strange to him, because he has in his nerves the memory of all the rules laid down in literature, art and life, for the behavior of the real, true and acceptable woman.

It is man who makes of woman what he wills. For man is woman's security. It is because he does not want her, that the *grande amoureuse* is so rare. These quiet women with the worship of man in their hearts, who now represent the *grandes amoureuses*, are stunted,—like the white palm-leaves grown in artificial darkness for the Roman Easter,—because neither men nor women are free, and the great, proud joy which is red and warm like the blood shining in the veins against the light, is unknown to this generation of overmuch reading and commercial struggle.

The *cérébrale* is the woman who has already an individualized sexual instinct; who does not yield herself without exactions, who eventually—if she does

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not find what she requires—does not give herself at all. It is difficult to make the differentiation clear except by a living example, and it happens that while I was writing this, such an one came to my knowledge.

She was the most perfect illustration of the *cérébrale* one can imagine, the embodiment of bright, intellectual, cultured womanhood. Her upbringing was like that of thousands of the gifted and—according to the ideas of the day—carefully educated young girls of the higher circles. Her father was a well-known professor; her brothers were also professors. She attended an excellent young ladies' school, and afterwards took a special course preparatory to teaching,—the usual method nowadays of assuring the future of the gifted, impecunious daughters of the higher circles. Then began that strange, uneasy time of waiting, a waiting without aim or content, which comes to every young maiden. She attends balls which disappoint her, goes into company which bores her, takes part in family intercourse which leaves her weary. Everywhere she expects to find something and everywhere she finds

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nothing. She is grown up, and awaits the surging waves of life; they are far, far away, there where she is not; here where she is, they are not. She has read in books of poetry and pages of history so much about the great happiness which comes upon the young woman like a thief in the night, and she waits for this thief with feverish eyes and suppressed breath; but he does not come. After a time her glance becomes dull, her breath weaker, and the just-awakened woman falls asleep again.

One young man, and another perhaps, out of her circle of acquaintances pays court to her. Good heavens! she has known this one ever since the time when he wore kilts; she has sat behind the door while the other was being tutored, and heard how he could not get into his head the simplest sort of things, in which she could easily have prompted him. Something stirs in her, though, when these youths come,—she does not know what; for a time she is quite enlivened; but then it seems so foolish, and presently she sees them try elsewhere, without caring. She sews and embroiders, walks and keeps house, is a good daughter and well-

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bred young lady, but the emptiness grows upon her; as if she were in a room without air, it seems as if she must die; and now and then she starts up in anxious doubt whether she still lives, whether it may not all be a delusion and she not really there. The make-believe of life,—modern toilets, mother's kitchen, father's wine-cellar, the addresses of a couple of drawing room lions, the transparent attentions of a provident, dry, self-made "good" man,—she feels a contempt for it all!

Meanwhile comes the first turning point of a woman's life,—the twentieth year. She stops and reflects. Her first youth is past, has slipped away like a summer night's dream, with scarcely a pausing-place for memory. She looks forward;—nothing different! Then something comes over the young girl; she feels that she must pull herself up out of herself, that she must do something in order to seem real to herself. That by which a woman becomes real to herself is the great awakening act of consummated love; but of this a well-bred and maidenly girl knows nothing. And that which the young girl would like to draw up out of

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herself, and cannot grasp, sinks deeper and deeper, glides away and disappears; the sweet, vague expectation vanishes; the first disillusionment has come. And now the young woman seats herself to write.

They all write,—these intelligent young women—either openly or in secret. They write in order to feign to themselves a contentment; whereas the man who writes does so in order to unburden himself of a contentment, real or fancied. The young woman who writes and the young man who writes are alike dissatisfied; but the woman writes in order to have something, the young man in order to be relieved of something. Gradually the scribbling woman grows to interpret her lack as a virtue. She was desirous of love; now she is desirous of knowledge. She begins to read; she gains for herself an outward content since she cannot gain an inward one, and the longing of the woman in her begins to grow silent and die away.

She breathes a little more freely now. Under certain circumstances,—such as a dislike to be dependent upon her parents, or the complaints of those parents that

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the expense of her education has been for nothing,—she allows her writings to be published. The first money gained thus without the humiliation of a genuine feminine profession, gives her an illusion of freedom. She believes that she is on the way to become mistress of herself; she unconsciously feels herself a misunderstood and unappreciated woman, and mistakenly tries to explain it on the grounds of her intellectual superiority. She writes on, and her voice rings louder; she attracts notice and her self-esteem increases.

This is the psychological process by which a whole series of women have become authors in the last quarter of a century.

The woman writer affords excellent material for the psychological study of woman; she cannot help betraying that process of becoming woman—or non-woman, whichever it may be—always concealed by other women and difficult to discover.

And of what do the majority of books written by women treat? They treat of the position of the daughter in the family; of woman's demand for life,

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which in maiden fashion, unclear and vague and cautious, is generally formulated as the demand of the artist-nature for the exercise of her art; of the injustice of marriage in which a young, fresh girl is mated with a man anything but fresh and active. They all treat of the substitute which John Stuart Mill (it took an Englishman to do that) offers the modern woman in place of the right to love; they treat of woman's right to freedom.

She of whom I speak, went this way also; it is the common and typical first phase.

After an interval she brought out something different,—some little volumes of society portraits. They were written just as a clever, lively, knowing, disillusionized woman talks; their charm and merit lay in their being spoken. This talent for picturesque, witty, characteristic speech, with an acute perception for the telling detail, is much more common in gifted women than in gifted men. A large part of good description is always gossip; therefore women and the so-called "good story-teller" excel in this art,—the latter having usually a very mediocre intellect.

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She was now really remarked. She had waited thirty years; she had married; but the great event of her life had not yet occurred. She had experienced outwardly all that a gentlewoman can; she had lived in the best and most fashionable society, and the best and most fashionable society had appeared to her insipid, absurd and barbarous. Especially the men of this society appeared so to her; the better the society, the earlier the men became bald, worn out and prosy. She had seen marriages made and broken, and love come and go; it always appeared to her only a short ecstasy and a long indifference, and she herself had grown ever more *cérébrale*.

As she advanced in the thirties she was seized by a dull wrath—the true reformer's wrath. Everything was rotten, and foulest of all were men. This kind of rancorous indignation, the causes of which are obscure, is usually accompanied by sexual coldness; she withdrew from married life. From this time she became ever more *cérébrale*, ever more judicial, and her style ever colder. Yet she would not have differed very greatly in disposition from our mothers if



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the "emancipation movement" had not come her way.

The color and tone of her books became like the hues and character of her clothing, constantly grayer and more stiff in the neck. Her wit turned sharp; her humor, acid; the moral sermon took the upper hand. She disdained working by womanly methods—it became her ambition to advance intellectually by the strength of her argument, and physically by the strength of her elbows. She cultivated intellectual friendships, she debated with professional men questions of political economy and social science, and fought for her views with emphasis and self-confidence. The warm tones and rounded lines in her "works" disappeared; they became as prosy as a professor's lecture.

Up to this time the process was such as thousands of women undergo in somewhat less marked form, and which we unscientifically enough are accustomed to consider as fitting and proper, and only the natural cooling-down of riper years. Again a time went by.

She traveled a great deal and began to take an interest in her dress; soon a

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rumor flew about that she had fallen in love. People designated as the man who had wrought this transformation an athlete, with the latest rules for physical development; and the women who had hitherto admired her as a paragon now advertised and commented upon this new phase. Nothing came of the romance, however, save the romantic suggestion of the possibility of love between this highly gifted woman, mentally and morally developed, this independent author, and a strong-bodied young man of intellectual insignificance. It proved impossible. The *cérébrale* found the minus greater than the plus; the disappointment greater than the gain.

But now came the reaction; the repressed nature refused to be longer bound. She became attached to a lean, sober, matter-of-fact man in modest circumstances, who had the two necessary qualities—his own longing and its response to her feeling. His youth gave her the deceptive idea of warmth, his complaisance transfigured him to a man worthy of admiration mentally and morally. She saw him not as he was—she saw him as her perpetually baffled

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demand for life depicted him; she raised him above herself and set herself under him, as she would have borne herself long ago in her youth towards the really superior man. She showed herself proudly with him everywhere, as if she had won the first prize among men; she could not exhibit her happiness sufficiently. And the child which she bore him—although in the twelfth hour—was beautiful, healthy and strong, as if from parents in their first bloom. The *grande amoureuse* had evolved out of the *cérébrale*, and her one service as woman was not drawn from two stunted lives, but was the fruit of her original capital—a blooming child of love.



#### IV.—THE DEMAND FOR HAPPINESS

“We wish to be happy!”—It is the cry of the age.

This demand, so far as our knowledge of past civilizations extends, has never come forward so nakedly before. It has always been clothed in some garb, oftenest in that of religion. Christianity, which has impressed its forms and ideals upon our life and morals, transfers all harmonious happiness to the other world, and at the same time converts that happiness into something impersonal, non-individual; by the mystics, happiness is regarded as reunion with the Infinite Soul.

Among our old fathers of culture, the Greeks and Romans, there was but one idea of personal happiness,—enjoyment, sensation. Since pleasure, other than personal, and sensation other than individual, cannot be felt nor understood, individualism arose among them at the

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beginning of their so-called decline. The Greeks became individualists at the beginning of their political disorganization; the Romans at the beginning of their moral disintegration. More than this does not concern us, for what the ancients called by the same name was, in its nature, a very different thing from the state of feeling which we describe by the word "happiness."

We, as they, seek enjoyment and sensation. Mankind has never done otherwise; we have never had in our unconscious consciousness any other cause for existence. But in this century something new has been added, something which was never before so openly avowed, never set itself up so insolently and self-assertingly; this is the declaration—We will be happy!

This is something different from the old, intermittent, noisy desire for pleasure and excitement, with collapses and inertia, allowing every yoke to be put upon its neck through long periods. This is something always awake, something integral, something which no momentary satisfaction can appease; which demands a satisfaction entire and con-

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stant, a lasting condition, and which presupposes awakened personalities.

I will be happy! That is the cry of modern individualism, and it was not raised till now. To be happy;—it never occurred to our grandfathers nor grandmothers to demand that! Their creed was expressed thus: "One must thank God if he is not unhappy." Unhappiness was for them the positive, happiness a negative thing, which only now and then took fleeting shape in some stroke of fortune. The poet has handed down his judgment:

"Is not unclouded happiness  
A harder thing to bear  
Than Fortune's most untoward strokes  
Which we, complaining, fear?"

What do these pious words conceal, if not that the poet looked upon "unclouded happiness" as wearisome and monotonous, whereas "untoward Fortune" had the inestimable advantage of playing upon the feelings and creating emotion?

This idea, and the general conceptions of the earlier time, presupposed crude, strong sensations and crude, strong pleasures, strength and rudeness, a total

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lack of gradation. Just as the ancients had eyes only for the strong, unbroken color, they had feeling only for strong, explosive excitements. They knew nothing of subtle gradations, of unending, incessant changes in a condition. And our poets know very little about these to-day, for they still dwell upon the essential transiency of happiness and describe it as perishable through monotony. Permanence, however, is not sameness; it consists in continual, endless modulation and change, a constant alteration, like the shimmer of light upon a surface of water. To conceive permanence as stability,—that is wholesale discernment; to be conscious of the infinite variations in a state,—that is self-recognizing individuality.

The yearning for happiness, for personal, individualized, richly variable and permanent happiness, intones itself at the close of this parting century in millions of souls, upon a deep ringing sounding-board of the durability of happiness. And as a general broad, swinging wave always precedes the single vibration, so the idea of the durability of happiness must first rise in millions of hearts and



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swell to a wave mountain, ere it can break in a single poet-soul and roll out in a great song of Life in Happiness.

This conception of a happiness which is not covered by the ideas of enjoyment and sensation, is now penetrating all classes, and wherever it appears it causes a condition of gnawing dissatisfaction with all that now is, accompanied by depressed vital energy. It is the longing for unity that leaps forth, and meeting nothing but disunion, withdraws again. The craving for happiness is the source of our disgust with life; the hopelessness of creating for themselves a unified existence drives thousands to suicide. In this desire for a condition of happiness is manifested an individualized inner life which was formerly unknown, an intensely personal soul-absorption which we do not find earlier than the close of this century. Formerly life was a struggle with circumstances, with many adventures and happenings; or a mental dog's sleep with automatic performances,—this latter being especially the daily life of women. Now man strives for an inner coherence of his ego, for a continuous satisfaction of his whole person-

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ality, for a more lasting, more tranquil, richer comfort within himself; and out of this springs his longing for a happy condition. And as woman always follows at the heels of man and differentiates in his footsteps, there arises in her also the desire for a state of happiness.

Man and woman now live in a daily tension.

I think this, of all the phenomena of the times, the most interesting, though perhaps the hardest to grasp firmly. It cannot be observed except in solitary instances, and only from the frequency of these incidents can general conclusions be drawn. People did not formerly live with daily intensity. We can observe in the older generations, among the country folk, the bureaucracy, etc., with what mechanical somnambulism, in what a half-awake condition the daily performances of daily life were gone through with. When there was a hitch in the machinery, and the daily routine through some external accident fell to pieces, the individual, rudely awakened from his psychological slumber, reacted in the same manner as a person aroused from real sleep,—with a burst of anger or with

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helpless and dazed action. Self-perception is for such people only a holiday meal; for others it is their daily bread. The first class carry mechanically and almost unconsciously the accustomed burdens, no matter how heavy if only they are accustomed to them; whereas the new being, with his developed sensibilities, cannot help being awake and personally present in his performances and endurances.

Hence the totally differing conception of the ideas of pleasure and sensation. And hence the generations of this century, and especially the younger, have less and less satisfaction in enjoyment and emotion, unless they can surrender themselves to it upon the soft pillow of a happy condition. And that for which millions are languishing develops into a theory of happiness, into philosophy, and into the aspiration for good conditions,—into socialism.

“The greatest possible good for the greatest possible number,” write the English utilitarians upon their banners; “Happiness for all” is the promise of socialism. “We have need of happiness; without it we die!” answers the chorus of

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cultured humanity. And in millions of women's souls rises the silent, unconscious cry: "Give us the happiness to live out our woman nature; that is for us the one, the only happiness!"

Aloud, they say—"Give us the right to play an active part."

Upon the rights of woman two remarkable and well-known books have been written: John Stuart Mill's "Subjection of Woman," and Bebel's "Woman and Socialism."

There is profound and positive knowledge in both of these books, so far as knowledge can be profound and positive; there is brave and generous good-will in them. But what shall we women do with them? Ah, God knows what the women did do with them; they accepted them. They believed them; they molded themselves according to them; in their unlimited power of adaptation they molded themselves to that which was written of them in these volumes. I have seen, spoken and dealt with them, —these women and Woman's Rights women, who hold Mill and Bebel enshrined in their fine, credulous, and ah, so often virginal hearts; they have

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honestly and to the best of their ability formed themselves into non-women.

For both these famous and courageous authors forgot one thing in their famous and courageous books; unfortunately it was the principal thing,—the woman! But woman, in her boundless sensibility to suggestion, is caught by everything,—the theorist, the agitator, the pedant. She is always whatever man desires; woman or not woman, just as he wishes.

Dear gentlemen and leaders, do not deceive yourselves and us! Your books are very good, very instructive and beneficial,—but what a pity that you do not know us in the least! Everything is there in your books; everything except the one spark revealing woman to man and man to woman; that is wanting. You can make us what you will;—courtesans, amazons, reasonable beings; holy, learned or idiotic wives and virgins; for we yield to every pressure of your finger and it is our nature to follow where you lead. But whatever you make us, we are not so happy, nor yet so unhappy as you imagine; for what you consider happiness for us is not our happiness, and what you look upon as

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unhappiness in us is not our unhappiness. For while man has in almost all ages "oppressed" woman, woman has, in nearly every age, influenced man.

Now, when the sensibility of man is refined to a degree before unknown, when his longing for happiness has swelled to an intensity never before experienced,—now is woman more than ever an indispensable part of his happiness. And precisely now is woman rallied by her benefactors to a struggle with man, or at least she takes it so, and acts as if called to such a conflict. Woman, sensitive to suggestion, who has allowed herself to be led by revolutionists and pastors, by mothers and aunts, by ethics and morals, lets herself now be led by "the Rights of Woman," and "her part in public life," and while the whole drift of modern development is toward a more intense inner life, the "good" awakened women press forward to an increased external life.

That is the great shortcoming in both these books about women; they direct their attention to her external position alone. A double stream is flowing through our times and this they do not

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perceive. Above runs the sharp, swift current of social and political demands, the pushing and struggling of rapidly changing ranks and classes; it arose in the French Revolution, sprang as a cataract in the "Freeing of the Burghers" in 1830 and 1848, and will before many a day come down in a mighty torrent before which possibly the bourgeoisie and many others will be swept away. But beneath and parallel to this runs another warmer stream from a more ardent source; it is the wish to live, to drink the cup of life in full. Swelling in the breasts of many, it forms a powerful stream. Men are no longer willing to lose themselves in social and political demands for freedom; they desire to live out their transient lives in full, to capture the condition of happiness; and they now see woman—without whom they cannot live—incapable of understanding them; stupid, spoiled, or moldering in her shell of musty forms and opinions; or in the ranks opposed, demanding Rights. Neither Mill nor Bebel take into consideration by even the slightest allusion, the fact that in the deepest and most important relations between man and

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woman it is never a question of rights and duties, ordination or subordination, boundaries or restraints, but only a question of how far their natures can merge into one another, or how far they cannot blend and give mutual enjoyment.

Upon this all ameliorative measures depend, relating to the rights and duties, domination and subordination and everything else with which the incompatible protect and defend themselves against each other.

All "rights" between man and wife are weapons of protection against the unfortunate efforts at union. But there is no protection against this, because in the most central question the electric instinct must speak; and when this does not exist, not even the book of the law can help.

This leading question in the psychology of woman,—the relation between man and wife,—is difficult to explore because of its many sides. There is the problem of the race; the question of the effect of race mixtures upon the relation; there are the opposing polygamic and monogamic inclinations, which when they exist, are certainly not to be directed by moral teaching nor good institutions; there are



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the most intimate sexual requirements with their plus and minus; the strength and weakness of the emotional nature, the differing kinds of development, and the enormous, unexplored domain of atavism; there are all the deviations from normal sexual nature; in short, what are there not here in active operation, and as unknown as America before discovery?

All these things should be taken into consideration in a discussion of the relation between man and wife; they have all gone to form it, and all, in a state of perpetual change, draw out of it again and leave it standing as an empty shell; and none of these things have been taken into consideration by Mill or Bebel, nor by the religious or civil law.

Mill's and Bebel's books,—reflecting the spirit of their day, only comprehended when it was already disappearing,—treat in their narrowness of only one thing, the legal position of woman, and battle for only one thing, a quite two-sided matter, upon which the letter or the intention of the law can come into application very seldom. The woodenness of these champions of the new, this paragraphic thinking with which they

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make the women who listen to them also wooden and paragraphic, is a reproach and no very light one. We have already had enough masculine pedants; if we are going to make pedants of our women also, life will be too dreary. And as a fact, wherever there is a "woman's movement"—and I am acquainted with them for no small part—there are woman pedants who stand forward prominently in it. The "woman-movement" is in itself a new kind of pedantry; it gives to woman every possible freedom save one,—that of being woman.

The old state of things was not altogether so bad as it appeared, for in it the woman had in largest measure the possibility of making herself beloved. And man loved her and could not do without her. Out of this sprang an authority whose paragraphs are nowhere weighed nor printed.

The wholly unpsychological starting-point of all pioneers for woman's rights, is that they draw a line between the past and future. In the past all was bad, it was nothing but violence and oppression; from now on all will be better. To be sure, they all agree there was once a state

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of things worthy of woman; the Matriarchate. Unfortunately that existed so long ago that we know really nothing about it. I do not believe in the happiness of the Matriarchate. Not that the idea does not please me;—it pleases me and I see it realized every day among the farmer-class and laboring people. But I do not believe the Matriarchate rendered people in any way more blissful than the Patriarchate.

Bebel, in his "Woman," finds it shocking that a man should have relations with several women, but contemplates with quiet good-will the primitive form in which the woman had relations with several men, and the inquiry into the paternity of the children was—for very good reasons—forbidden. However, this is no cause for quarrel. With greater refinement of feeling, the polygamic dispositions decrease in number everywhere and the monogamic increase.

The realization of a radical reform of society and consequently a change in the position of woman, is not so simple as it is pressingly needed. To be sure, we are now come tolerably near the point where things cannot go on longer as they are.

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It is true, woman feels now as never before, that she stands between two chairs and wears herself out in nervous impatience. It is true all customary methods of stupefaction have become ineffectual through overuse; the "ideals" under which the spirits formerly bowed are in part dead, in part dying; it is true man insults woman unceasingly, and woman revolts secretly and openly against man. It is true our present condition is like a ball which a juggler balances on the point of a little rod;—what follows from all this? There must be a change.

But what must be changed?

Bebel and Mill, and the avowed and unavowed Woman's Rights women, and the natural and compulsory celibates cry in chorus: "The relation between man and woman."

How, then? The relation of the individual man and woman can be changed every day, just as they themselves wish, if they are a pair of honest and warm creatures and have not lost the sensitive instinct of choice. Between man and woman in the abstract and in general it will never be any different—from what it will be.

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A great alteration can take place,—that which the socialistic state of the future is pledged to effect, and the Agrarian movement now undertakes to bring about; the economic security of productive labor and especially of the poorer classes. A boundless improvement in general health and probably in intelligence would follow, if hundreds of thousands of budding souls and lives no longer went to ruin in misery and exclusion; but the relation between man and woman, the sexual life, would receive a new face upon its upper surface only.

Mankind is not made of wood, as John Stuart Mill—for whom the ideal relation between the sexes consists in holding intelligent conversation—seems to think; but is, rather, a vast body, full of germs, energies, desires, instincts and passions, which are there to be thrown out, millions for destruction, millions for regeneration, millions for degeneration.

Religion, in past times, absorbed a part of the superabundance of these passions, and tamed or crippled them. The Church was a safety valve for the too high pressure; she diverted it, she discovered the “diverted impulse.” Just as

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the sexual satisfaction demands an accompanying soul-satisfaction, Religion, by making herself profound and beautiful, appealed equally to the soul and senses. She did not concern herself so much with what she taught as with how she stirred the heart. In Catholicism the sexual instinct was sublimated, and has left behind in its buildings, pictures and music a unified culture. The portraits of women of that time all have a contented, still, sated expression; but we find also that in that period, female epileptics, hysterical females, half-idiot in transports of ecstasy, painted with an eye for their state as no artist has since painted, no poet perceived, no scholar understood. The ancient gentlemen were not moralists, but they were psychophysiologists—who still await their scientific interpretation.

Catholicism absorbed into herself the sexual impulse, stimulated and appeased it alternately, taught it finer shades of feeling, set in motion finer stimulants, and delivered it back into life again. She herself absorbed all the excess of sensuality. Where this was not the case, it was because of the temperament of some of

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her practitioners. This new temperament, matter-of-fact, judicious and disciplinarian, of the stamp of Bebel and Mill, brought the Reformation and overmoralized Northern Europe.

What was the result?

Yes, what was the result of increased order and reason, increased conventional uprightness, discarded ardor and accepted "morality"? What was the consequence of the fact that Northern-European rigor, boredom and bad conscience dictated the moral laws? I will not dwell upon the coarsening of taste, the decline of art, and the loss of tranquil feeling, which continue to this day, but there was another, a special consequence—the trials for witchcraft.

We have as yet only an official and predominantly political history of these trials; if we ever have a psycho-physiological history of human evolution, or of European evolution alone, this period will be one of those to stand out most sharply. The trials for witchcraft were essentially the release of suppressed and stored-up pressure. All the outlets for excitement which were formerly found in public gaieties, banquets, masquerades, penances,

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ecstatic fervors, etc., had been discarded, for several generations. Life under Protestantism was uniform, sophistic, devoid of imagination. A small measure of enjoyment was allowed people in the physical union; more than this was not deemed necessary. They had the unlimited right to the married life—and there was an end! But they needed more.

The unoccupied fancy lay fallow and worked, in a vacuum. Life was bare and ugly and the imagination became vicious again as in the early Middle Ages. But under the pressure of the ruling good sense and respectability it dared no longer naïvely show itself in its ugliness as formerly. All the surplus of sexual emotion which the simple satisfaction of its purpose does not absorb, and which will expend itself in bestiality, folly and extravagance, penances or productive creation,—in the infinitely varied forms of life-manifestation, with the infinite variety of emotional excitements,—for all this there was no outlet. People had to be decorous and wooden, and decorous and wooden they were.

But vitality and sexuality are one. Mankind could not exist nor move an



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inch if it did not live upon, and were not drawn forward by allurements. And all entrances to pleasure which had stood open till far into the Renaissance,—the numerous arrangements for strong and weak, normal and perverse, direct or misplaced impulses, were nailed up. A period of culture unfolded itself; the inventive instinct puzzled itself for new attractions.

It found them. Secret, unconfessed incitements from bad consciences, concealed like the vices which flourished in the pietism following; cowardly incitements, with obscene images which had heretofore only crept out occasionally among the martyrs of monastic confinement, seized now first upon the decorous clergy who shone foremost in chaste family life, and by means of these infected the equally honorable councilors, magistrates and other high authorities. They spread like an epidemic among the "common folk," and a frenzy of bestial fantasy rolled through the lands, manifesting itself outwardly in a pretended dishonoring of woman. The psychosis of the masses which found expression in the witch persecution had only too clearly

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a sexual origin; it was the desire of woman which remained unsatisfied in monogamy, it was the irrepressible vital instinct for a multiplicity of excitements which, restricted on all sides and in all forms and becoming at last perverted, sought satisfaction in grotesque, obscene images and visions of women mated with animals and devils,—occurrences about which their lascivious desires, which they dared not gratify otherwise, constantly played. In the continually spreading hallucinations of devils' and witches' orgies, was revealed such a monstrous brutality of imagination as had never before been heard of, and as is only possible from the restraint and repression of a powerful natural force. In order to create a real, external outlet for the excited imagination, they invented the details of the trials for witchcraft, which for idiotic perversity stand unrivaled in history.

That was one consequence of masculine over-morality;—for the other, the feminine?

We have, from that period, two kinds of evidence as to the inner life of women; the portraits of women in the

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galleries, and the attitude of women towards the prosecution of witches.

From this point begins an illness, in the midst of which we are to-day.



## V—THE HISTORY OF WOMAN'S ILLNESSES—A BIT OF EVOLUTION

From the instant in which man completed the division between himself and the Church, he began to seek in woman what he had hitherto sought in that Church. He made of woman an intermediate link between himself and the supernatural.

That we, as human beings, were not benefited by this is clear enough; that as women, we had to be exalted above ourselves, is equally clear. That we are to-day still occupying this height, is less easy of comprehension.

We must impress one fact upon our minds; man is, what we women never are, a supra-sensuous being. He is never satisfied in any way nor at any point with what really exists,—precisely because through his mental and physical constitution he is the creative organism; whereas woman is the bearing organism. As soon as man ceases to be creative, ceases, that

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is, to consider the world and us also as his material,—he begins to resemble woman. But thereupon he ceases to be man; it is his declaration of bankruptcy.

Therefore I do not hesitate to say that the men who teach and advocate the equality and the similar position of man and woman, always produce rather the impression of physical or mental bankrupts,—be they scholars, poets, or simply train-bearers to the ladies. For it is not a matter of forming something anew, bounding it and providing weapons for its protection, because there are a certain percentage of mean fellows and villains among men; in the true man there has always existed and will ever exist, fusible in form and with infinite capacity for modification, the wish to raise woman to his own level, and if possible high above himself. Every honest man carries in the recesses of his soul a touch of worship for woman,—and that which one worships, one naturally defers to.

I should like to go farther, and say it is to this adoration by man that we owe finally the woman-emancipation movement. Woman rebels at last against passing for something which she is not.

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She is not an angel, not a Madonna, not any supernatural creature; this she wishes to demonstrate emphatically, once for all. And the difficult economic conditions furnish the opportunity for this impulse to break forth.

With the Reformation began the sublimation of woman, but with it began also the first convulsions of the emancipation (let us remember Ursula von Grumbach), and with it appeared the old maid. Catholicism knew nothing of the old maid; indeed it is striking that where Catholicism is active to-day, it still knows nothing of her as a social figure. Yet there must have been in earlier times, through wars, revolution, trading in foreign lands, knighthood, numerous monasteries and other hindrances to marriage, at least as great an excess of the feminine element over the masculine as to-day. Nor did these conditions change until this century, for the guild organizations, military colonization across the seas, and bloody international wars still decimated the masculine numbers. But there was no bitter complaining of this, either from the remainder of the men or the surplus women; why, then,

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have people now come to such painful consciousness of it?

The answer might run: because of the wide-reaching ego-culture which in this century has taken the place of religion; whereby an infinite swarm of inferior egos, —*echantillons sans valeur*, to use a postal-card expression,—fill the world with demands, for which most of them, even with the best fortune, could with difficulty produce “proofs of qualification.” There is to-day a total lack of those resorts and institutions which give the idle occupation, the empty, content; a lack which in Catholic lands to-day occasions the ever growing population of the cloisters.

No one would call the nun an old maid, nor does she feel herself such. She carries neither in face nor figure—those whom I have seen, at least—the characteristic marks of one. Even in the sickly and suffering nuns there is a calm steadfastness, something noticeable,—exactly that which is not found in the old maid, and which arises chiefly from the fact that the nun’s imagination does not turn about a fixed idea with bitter feeling, that she does not feel herself one of those who have nothing, and therefore



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compare herself enviously with those who have more.

From the standpoint of "equality" before mentioned, the needs of women are too frequently confounded with those of men; the passive, which must first be awakened, with the active which wakes of itself; and women have deferred to this suggestion with the same alacrity as to all others. To be a nun is an honor and arises from a voluntary renunciation; old-maidhood is not an honor, and arises usually not from voluntary renunciation; and in this delicate point we must not leave out of consideration the deep-reaching effect of inflamed womanly vanity upon body and soul.

Woman as wife has undergone in the last four hundred years a no less difficult, and as a sexual being, no less fearful process. In the moment when the adornment and refuge of the religious calling was withdrawn from woman, old maidenhood became a humiliation, and at the same moment man's exaltation of woman, the beloved, was felt to be overdone.

Of the worship of Mary we lack almost all historical details; but they would help

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us very little if we had them. As well ask how the idea of the Gothic dome originated. It was suddenly there! It appeared, was embodied, shaped and reshaped, and gradually disappeared. It was a creation of man's soul; a spring-flood of transcendent feeling which rose to heaven and fell; a poem with its own laws of beginning and end. And similarly, one day the Mariolatry was there,—the invention of the masculine soul, the softest minor chord of man's sensitive passion, which always was, and always will be, so long as the natural and ultra-natural creative power of man shall last.

The moment of conception is so short, fleeting and uncertain that it is an easy matter to leave it out of consideration entirely, and the infinitely more intimate relation of the woman to the child grew upon man so overwhelmingly that he fashioned her into the Mother with her Son; fashioned her out of the greater fleshliness of the woman, in whose blood the child grows nine months long, on whose breast he is nourished another nine months, and who feels his every sorrow her whole life long as her own pain.

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Frailer than man, more full of sorrows than he, more bound to earth than himself,—so he saw her one day, the woman with the fruit of her womb, the young mother with her little child; she moved him, in her helpless loveliness; the vessel of all human life became holy to him and he set it up above himself. Christ, the Man, vanished for men, from the Church, and the little Child appeared upon the arm of his Mother, or the dead Son upon the knees of the Mater Dolorosa.

The greatest height which man has reached in the understanding of woman and the mystery of life, he achieved then, when he placed the Mother with her Child upon the altar. For in conceiving woman as holy and letting the little child stretch out his tiny hands towards the heart of every man, every woman became holy in her womanhood, and wrong and harshness toward any child, a sacrilege. An immeasurable moderation of customs and softening of hearts proceeded from every picture of Mary on every altar; and Christ, the God and the Infant, upon the arm of the Holy Virgin, spoke with his little naked child's body, praising or upbraiding every man: "Inasmuch as ye

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have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me!"——the god-like in the child, and the child-like in the God. The Holy Virgin spread her mantle over all virgins and all mothers,—and violation of a woman became a deadly sin.

Yet another thing resulted from this elevation of the woman and mother from the natural to the supernatural; it freed man from woman.

We cannot conceal from ourselves that woman, by her very nature and constitution, is often burdensome, and even disagreeable, to man,—even to the very best of men. With her states of body and the frequent mental depression and moral irresponsibility dependent upon them, with her moods, anger and tears, her vanity and tendency to overrate herself, with her narrow points of view and talkative obtrusiveness,—she charms and worries the man whom she has in her power as her matrimonial possession. A great part of the enmity shown towards women in these times and in our present literature, arises from this unavoidable lack of fitness between man, who wants repose, and woman, who does not give it.

The Madonna worship removed this

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incongruity; it removed man from too great nearness to woman; it removed him inwardly from her; it made him undisturbed by his accidental companion; it calmed his nerves and prevented him from being brutal or irritable; it made him indulgent toward the woman, without making him weak toward her, as is generally the case nowadays. In the spectacle of perfect womanhood and the eternal mystery of life, all the creative power in man was lifted to its highest mental and spiritual action, and all the hundred little broken lines with which the everyday woman surrounded and confused him, vanished into nothing. Man became in the highest sense, man—and woman remained woman.

Afterwards, in the Reformation, the image worship fell; the Mother and Son disappeared from the altar; the child ceased to be holy, and infanticide prevails up to the present day, especially in Protestant lands.

Something else now took place, which one would not believe if the whole Protestant morality did not confirm it. Man transferred the conception of the highest womanhood in which he had been

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trained for centuries, abruptly to woman, to every woman. The heavenly image being gone, he was thrown again upon the earthly woman and began to demand of her the qualities of the heavenly one. It was a subtle process which long remained concealed and only very gradually revealed itself. It was a process, too, of which we can discern little in Catholic countries, although they, and Catholicism itself especially, received visible finger-prints of the new spirit of the times.

Next sprang up a notion of "immorality" which was before unknown. What had until this period been comprised in the religious idea of the immoral and sinful,—usury, fraud, false witness, etc.—now, in distinction to the new "immorality," lost more and more the stamp of dishonor; the idea of immorality shrank to one single item—the sexual. Every deviation from the prescribed code was visited with the full weight of shame.

And here began the tribulations of woman;—for naturally it was against woman that the whole severity of this standard turned.

Man now required of her the immacu-

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lateness he had once honored in a heavenly symbol; he followed her demeanor, actions and disposition with a distrustful glance, and what he had mildly overlooked or utterly ignored in Catholic times, now filled him with a morose eagerness for amendment. They had shattered the image of the pure Virgin; but now every tinker and cobbler set up an altar to the pure woman in his own house. Venerable ministers and scholars led the way with good example, and soon the daughter of every senator, pastor, sexton and undertaker had to shine as an example of womanliness. The natural slip of the woman became the unnatural; the illegitimate child, the disgrace of all disgraces, and the maiden who had become a mother, the outcast of her sex. Formerly the Church—as Dr. Ratzinger relates in his instructive history of “The Care of the Poor”—placed receptacles at her doors where she who had secretly borne a child might deposit it, sure of the Church’s care and protection, “that no mother fall into temptation to murder her new-born babe.” Now instead there came a period of frantic rage against this most innocent of all transgressions; the

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number of child-murders became legion, and the despairing murderers of their own offspring were exhibited in the pillory or at the place of execution as a spectacle and target. Even in our own day, the commonest crime among girls of the lower classes is child-murder; for the higher classes there are, of course, other expedients.

A further consequence of the deepened masculine concern for women was the discovery of the witch. This was simply one of those violent upheavals in which one symbol changes place with another; the holy becoming obscene, the heavenly, devilish.

The unending disappointment which the active imagination of man suffered through the earthly woman hastened the conception of the witch, as an abortion of his creative necessity. His fear of woman as a sexual creature, of woman as mystery, found frantic and absurd expression in the imaginary sexual devil-worship of woman. Thus woman, who had once been the mediator between him and the Diety, now became the mediator between him and vileness,—with which she still has a good deal to do to-day.



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And how did woman meet this sudden and fearful overthrow? Did she show any power of resistance, any self-assertion, pride of womanhood, strength of a good conscience, any of the qualities which bespeak originality or even the pretense of originality? On the contrary, she showed herself the wholly receptive, yielding, blindly following creature which she is to-day; as she now lets herself be humbugged into the struggle for woman's rights, so foreign to her nature, she then allowed herself to be persuaded of witchcraft. Even more; she actually strove to be a witch, she thirsted for it, she languished for the horrible martyrdom, as she to-day burns to enter the ranks of men as non-woman. It was a psychosis, called up by a suggestion of the masculine imagination, which overpowered even those most capable of resistance, as has since often been the case.

This phase had rendered woman pliant; from this time on she begins to change gradually. The large, voluptuous, healthy animalism of the earthly woman—her entire naturalness—vanishes; a change is initiated in a certain direction

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towards a certain type. Woman no longer reposes in herself as in the pictures of the Middle Ages; she poses for outward effect, she represents something, she impersonates innocence, modesty, loveliness, majesty; there is an intention in her face,—the intention to make everything right, to correspond to the heavenly Greek ideal which man has wrought into shape. One never sees the child now, even the indications of motherhood disappear, vanishing so completely that where the body formerly showed the greatest circumference it has now the least; the waist glides down, and forbids by its waspishness every thought of the vocation of woman.

In order clearly to comprehend the change in man's conception of woman, let us take the accidental witnesses at hand,—the long rows of sacred and profane pictures and portraits from the Middle Ages up to the present day. When I observe these pictures which fill the galleries in great number, I cannot help reading in them the story of woman's sufferings written there in invisible characters,—the history of her sorrows and evolution.

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And when I come to the portraits of women of this century and day, I no longer wonder that a part of the women say, "Let us cease to be women." No, I do not wonder that we already see frequently—especially among the English—types which no longer have the faces or bodies of women, but mark an intermediate form, a third sex, which certainly may have the qualifications of competition with man, and of stamping the human spirit with the sterility of hermaphroditism. Still less do I wonder that the time has come—it is here now—when a steadily increasing number of women, dismayed at the extreme peril of their inner sanctuary, feel the overmastering impulse—to be women and nothing else but women!

This desire will finally lead them to conscious knowledge of their femininity, to an insight into their own woman nature. With this an evolutionary curve and a severe process of disease will have found an end. For even to man the woman has something to assert,—her woman nature, upon which he has so often tried painful experiments in times of unhealthy creative energy.

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The Church once made woman the vessel of divinity, laid the Son in his extremest helplessness, not in the arms of the Heavenly Father, but of the earthly mother, and thus placed the motherly woman in the nucleus of the world. Now we are so far advanced as once more to consider ourselves the vessel of all life,—a bitterly achieved consciousness, whereas formerly it was unconscious,—and with this feeling, we shall again raise the child upon the altar from which he has been taken, and with him, our own vocation also. All healthy masculine strength will protect us in our womanhood and motherhood, and in nothing else but these. It is true, for this is indeed a very great and complete recovery of health by men. But for what, then, do we bear sons?

To return to the study of these picture treasures in the galleries,—what do we find? We find man's conception of woman, the kind of woman that he needs and loves and honors, the kind of woman that he sees or wishes to see. Throughout the Middle Ages, till the period of Durer and Cranach, we find a markedly peculiar type which would be very falsely

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described as æsthetic. These women have peaceful, quiet and cheerful faces, full of innocence; long, narrow, young figures, the shoulders scant, the breast small, the limbs under the garments slender and thin; the clothing on the upper part of the body close and tight, almost constraining. The waist is cut off just under the bosom, and the wide, full skirts give the most womanly part of the womanly figure full and unrestricted opportunity for movement and expansion. The abdomen is plainly visible in the entire pose of the body, and stands out prominently under the clothing even in the figures of the holy women and virgins. The mother function of the woman is that which is marked in the whole type, holy as well as worldly,—which defines the entire conception of woman.

The Reformation and Renaissance swept away religious art. For a short time there was overflowing joy in life,—unrestricted expansion. The portraits of that period emphasize the characteristics of masculinity and femininity; under the amplitude of feminine clothing was clearly indicated the fulfilled vocation,

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maternity. For a long interval, until about the time of Louis XIV., and long after the gay colored clothing had been exchanged for the somber black garb, the sign and sequence of the Reformation, we find under the highly puffed skirts and flat, protruding corset-board the condition of pregnancy in considerable prominence. But as soon as absolutism has become a fact, there is an almost instant change. Man is separated from the soil, the farmer is poor and a serf, the nobility equally poor, broken, and condemned to a parasitic existence at court; the earth no longer belongs to the many, it belongs to the few, is become a thing of trade and barter, a monopoly of the rulers;—and woman?

If one wishes to study anywhere the economic revolutions, he can find the data, accurate and at first hand, in the portraits of women.

Now the feminine body must entice; it must no longer bear. The smile becomes sweet and coquettish, the glance inviting; the upper part of the body is modeled with almost ideal grace above the puffed skirts, the bosom swells out, the abdomen is laced away to nothing,—

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woman must please, must arouse covetousness, must flatter the possessor; in no feature must her mission be indicated; from this time on that was regarded as ugly and disfiguring—as it still is—and was concealed. Still another century and old and young trip about on stilt-like heels, in short dresses, balancing Babel towers of powdered and be-ribboned coiffures on their heads, and are all goodwill, amiability and dollishness. The whole costume henceforth is of a kind to damage the child and pregnant mother as much as anything could.

What does it mean? The economically ruined man must be stimulated in order that he may love and enjoy; woman has sunk to the level of a mistress, and one does not wish children of a mistress. The oppressed man wants nothing in the appearance of his bride to remind him of the long burden consequent upon the short joys,—the care of offspring. The child is conceived with a sigh. Another step nearer the present and we see Greek costumes in a cold northern climate; woman must be more æsthetic. Of Byron, the great singer of Freedom, whom I still think pretty much a fool,

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but who, like many others, was set upon a pedestal for very obvious literary and political reasons,—of Byron it is related that he could not bear to see a pretty woman eat.

Pale, transparent women now became the fashion; the consumptive appears as the object of love in literature; a woman carries in shame and impatience the burdensome child which so disfigures her. In the feminine portrait of this whole period empty faces look out at us in which nothing is visible but an expressionless smile, equally insipid for everybody; for the times are hard and woman must herself look out for a "provider," for "love," since we have become sentimental.

Then comes the time of "liberal citizenship," and "highest enlightenment." It enlightens for us the fact that men no longer tolerated the slightest token of individuality in women; women had only to look "pretty" and "feel nobly." Woe to the painter who could not paint fashion-plates!—he could starve. Everything which related to the child and the vocation of woman was ignored; it was indecorous to see, to allude to it, or to take it into account; nothing was



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known about such things. In this age of theatrical mania, they played theater with themselves and others. And now we have come so far in the matter of portraits that in the pictures of "moderns" absolutely nothing is to be seen except something streaky, obliterated and ghostly-vague which is entitled "feminine portrait." This is the artistic expression of the fact that men do not in the least know any more what to do with women.

"Liberal citizenship" has developed into wholesale commerce, great industries, plutocracy, with a horde of dependent appointees. No one stands on his own feet, and no one owns the tools and proceeds of his labor. The whole structure of society rests upon the basis of working to order, and for the wage-givers; the employer decides what work shall be done, and how; everything is piece-work. Productive labor is reduced almost to a cipher, since the culture of the soil is no longer productive for the owner. The present system of society is an elaborated form of parasitism. Endless hosts of parasites sit one above the other, beginning with the proletarian at the foot, and

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suck one another dry. The parasitic positions are the best paid; the less parasitic a man is, the worse it stands with his income.

Our modern views, moral and social, are ruled by the maxim, "Help thyself!" In these lofty and beautiful words is condensed the whole spirit of modern economic doctrine—free competition. In the early days of Protestantism the version was:—"God helps those who help themselves!" But since we have no other expression for contact with the Almighty than the building of churches, the opening clause of the earlier Protestants, which I must own had already a savor of self-interest about it, has fallen into oblivion. Help thyself! is a very good saying. Munchausen had well shown how a man can help himself, for he, when he fell into the water, pulled himself out again by his own queue. In the dim Middle Ages this saying read also: "Help others, and God will help you!"

We have seen in the portrait galleries how woman has developed more and more from a productive to a parasitic creature. This finds ample expression in this century in the decrease in the

number of children. Thus woman's *raison d'être* is actually diminished. A series of financially insufficient bachelors ask: "If we no longer dare allow ourselves children, why should we hang upon our necks hysterical wives who can neither cook and clean, nor help earn a living?" We meet this reflection especially among men in public or private parasitical positions. But it is its own denial, for man can rarely resist granting these things to himself.

When the social relations have reached this point, one thing inevitably appears among the Germanic races,—the movement for the emancipation of woman, the systematic parasitism of woman. It came first to the English, a commercial nation with monopolized, unproductive land; and then to the equally eager and commercial Americans. More time was required for it to reach a land like Germany, which is still in some sections a farming land; it appeared there finally simultaneously with the perception that the farming classes could no longer hold out against existing conditions. The "Woman-Movement" and the corset invariably go hand in hand, although the

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former reckons it among its tasks energetically to do away with the latter. When the country girl begins to lace, the balance has been lost between debit and credit, in the farmer class.

Man must first obtain a firm hold upon the soil again, before woman can take root in him, according to her nature. Until then, women will constantly seek to add new pursuits to the many already open to them,—and right numerous these are, even in lands which know no woman-movement. In Bavaria and France, for instance, it is not material stress merely, which impels women thus; it is far more a mental distress, an inner emptiness, the steering into the void, which they try to escape by study, by a calling, an effort, or a business.

We must not measure the movement for the emancipation of woman by its leading speakers, nor by the majority of its public champions. The feminine struggle differs in no way from the masculine. When we turn from the superficial aspect, we have to admit that this woman-movement, in its deepest origin, represents not a starting point but a terminus. Though we have brought

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women to the condition of yielding up their profoundest happiness, they have not yet resigned their right to life and being. The instinct for life is always stronger than the sexual instinct. "The present conditions of life," says Garin, that quiet and profound observer of human nature, "prevent woman from attaining her right,—love. Therefore she demands Rights,—and with justice."



## PART TWO





## VI—THE FORCE OF ANXIETY

A long era of evolution was thus passed, whose influences will be felt for centuries. Woman ceased to be regarded as a necessary creature, and she had educated herself, or let herself be educated as a creature for pleasure. In this process not a few women were sacrificed,—witness the cloisters and the system of prostitution. To this tendency chiefly, we owe the short duration of life among the rich and distinguished families of the city, where the constraint could be better enforced than among the country gentry or landed nobility. Immoderate and impossible demands were made upon woman's vital energy and endurance by restraining her natural functions, bodily and mental; and thereupon followed generations of weaker and more sensitive children, who were forced to re-mold life and veil reality because they felt unable to look it squarely in the face. This created the theatrical mania of the past century. All the world played at

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something. First, under the pervading absolutism, they assumed the courtly, tragic style of the classical dramas; then came the phase of the pastoral plays, which were not only performed but completely lived; of this we have lasting evidence in the houses and parks, the decorative requisites hewn out of stone, etc., from the Trianon to Hellbrunn and Bayreuth. One could no longer be himself; he must have a rôle which made something of him, and which, like the steel corset-board, must be worn daily, his own spinal column not sufficing to hold him erect.

This theater-going and playing continued into this century, which likewise is a century of spectacle and scenic effect. Art, literature, politics,—have all been mere phrase, declamation and posing. Although we have remained retrospective, we have by philosophy, Biblical criticism and composition, cut off all organic connection with the past: we call those vigorous early times brutal, coarse and grim; we have become so refined that we maintain whole ranks of “sublime” authors, electrifying actors, and artists who cannot paint. What, think

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you, will the future ages say to the "monumental" portraits of the greatest men of our century? There are not even clothes, let alone bodies, portrayed there! And yet these great men have anxiously avoided discovering the existing artists who are really able to paint body and soul. Later will be said to us, as we say to the great ones of the past whose aspect and character have been preserved by great painters: "Show us him who has painted you, and we will tell you who you are."

The spirit of the old Church was still active two centuries after the outward separation of the churches. There was still, until this century, a certain peace of the soul, the effect of the old unshaken view of life. The old symbols were still effective, even in the "purified" church. Above all, the old social organization was still in effect; though internally undermined by absolutism, it stood externally firm. Life was ruled from the standpoint of duty, which checked the exuberance of individual greed, as, earlier, the reference of everything earthly to the divine, had done. As every one exercised self-restraint rigidly and constantly, no

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one felt that restraint as hardship or injustice. A widespread charity, born of the teachings of the old Church, was now attributed to duty,—it was a matter of course, about which there was little talk or fuss. This connection with the universal, in the fulfilment of daily duties, gave peace to the spirit. “They were contented;” they were submissive and enduring; all ranks and classes submitted and endured. To this period belongs the verse of a poet,—so far as I am aware, still undiscovered:

Glücklich ist,  
Wer vergisst,  
Was doch nicht zu ändern ist.

“Happy is he who forgets what cannot be altered.”

I should be inclined, however, to ascribe this pessimism in waltz meter to a somewhat late date,—the beginning of this century, for instance, since the praise of contentment is already a sign of discontent.

And discontent now began to appear, to grow, to spread and penetrate everywhere. It came in the shape of an imagined harmony to be found far, far

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away, beyond everything established. Goethe and Schiller, and the hosts of lesser writers, fled before it to the Greeks, the Niebelungen, the Edda, the Jews and the heathen. As in Schubert's "Wanderer"—"There where thou art not is happiness!" This sentiment revolutionized the political conditions, created realms, constitutions, the press, representatives of the people, etc.; all "samples without value," mere tools for new forms of corruption, molding and decaying within a few decades like the piece-work façades of modern palaces! It was the acid which ate away the roots of the old view of life that had almost become second nature; from Hegel to Schopenhauer, from Kant to Nietzsche, it gnawed into the established organic conception of the world, as Munchausen's wolf ate its way through the nag before his wagon, and at last came out in the harness in front and dragged the wagon after him. It entered into atheism, materialism, monotheism; it was very pretty, a "marvel of the human mind," but—it was not "bread."

And through all, woman kept pace, with grace and dignity. She became

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enthusiastic over philosophy and government, over writer and actor; she "twined" and "clung," unused to stand alone in anything, to rely upon herself or to act independently. In order to do so, indeed, she must first take footing in her sex, in the assumption of her woman-nature, and every direct indication of this tendency was looked upon as "unwomanly." Woman had no nature; she was not subject to immutable, imperative conditions,—save to a "passionateness" of Jewish invention, which the revolutionary writers turned to literary account.

In the midst of "giant strides of progress by the human mind and human power of invention," a new and hitherto unnoticed condition reveals itself more and more clearly,—that of nervous depression.

In steadily increasing numbers the diseases of exhaustion appear in man,—nervous prostration, mental collapse, obscure mental illnesses, anxiety, restlessness and all the other symptoms which express the feeling of transciency in business or private life. Life itself breaks into smaller and smaller particles, till at last it becomes the matter of a

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moment, the instantaneous portrait, the momentary enjoyment, the momentary gain. And man, himself the creature of a moment, comes to woman with his moment's love, momentary weakness and all his momentary humors; and he demands of her all that he has found described in books as "womanly,"—devotion, tenderness, passion, inspiration, pity.

What does he find?—when it is not simply a matter of payment in one form or another. He meets an astonished gaze, in which flashes something he cannot and does not wish to interpret, but which, interpreted, is scorn and aversion; he finds a limp hand in which no pulse beats, a stiff, angular body, a nervousness which transfers itself to him painfully, like a swarm of ants on bare skin; and something which makes his weariness more fatiguing, his irritability more intense, his disquiet more intolerable. He declares with bitterness that the "cultured" woman can no longer cheer or calm, afford pleasure or recreation, sympathize or be companionable; so it is better to seek refuge elsewhere, where at least for the moment,—and what does one ask more?—he can find forgetfulness.

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Meanwhile the woman of whom he has just taken leave, expresses herself also. She asks herself: "Is this He, the lordliest of all? the reputed noble, good, strong, handsome creature?—the Man! This is no man,—there are no men any more." She gazes dreamily at the strong carter unloading casks before her window; and if she awakes it is to such emptiness, such boredom, such utter vacuity that it alarms and hurts her, and her thoughts turn in all directions, seeking some satisfaction, some mission.

This seeking for an aim, something for herself, of her own, a refuge which the man does not understand and which he is not allowed to inspect, which is concealed from him,—we find in almost all the more active women, maidens, wives, and mothers, even when they really have occupation enough with the care of children and home. Whether it is lessons in architecture, the worship of an author, the attending of lectures or the reading of new and exciting books; whether it is felt as a joyful advance, as formerly, or as an unwelcome self-torture, as it is to-day,—these are only differences of degree.



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The chief thing is the separation from man in the center of interest which is concealed from him, which he does not set in motion,—in which the woman wishes to be by herself. As counterpart of this, the man has his card-parties, clubs and banquets. This is more significant than it appears, for it shows that where the man, after his work is over, seeks recreation, relaxation and an agreeable simpleton,—the woman, her work completed, desires excitement, stimulation and exaltation.

That is to say, the man feels himself exhausted, the woman feels herself merely bound down.

We have a parallel to this in a very distant past, which nevertheless offers many examples in line with our present development. We know that the acceptance of Christianity was much more general among the aristocratic women of the Roman Empire than among the men. Where the man, holding some official position, developed into a gourmand, the woman developed into an enthusiastic Christian; that is, where the man sought relaxation, the woman sought fresh exertions. If we wish to make quite

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clear to ourselves the need and urgency of the present time, it is from this point we must start.

In this century man is passing through one of his most difficult crises. Externally viewed it appears, and is often stated to be, a wholly material crisis, caused by the transformation of the various lands from farming countries into industrial countries. It is a crisis similar to that in which the Roman Empire fell. This tearing of men away from the soil and transplanting them upon one another as parasites, has produced for several hundred years a frightful inner turmoil which is shown more and more clearly in increasing fatigue and outward dejection. It is as if a man should try to hold himself upright all his life, hanging by his hands instead of standing on his feet. In this situation he becomes at last too worn out to attempt to change his condition; and from this arises perhaps the caustic nitric-acid pessimism of literature and philosophy in this century.

But this, after all, is only the superficial view. The underlying cause of both material and mental distress is the fact that for four hundred years a line of

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evolution in human thought has unrolled and has arrived at nothing.

The mystery of the world is more inscrutable than ever; all the results of "scientific development," which we have honored with the same reverence that was once accorded to religious revelations, have crumbled in our hands; the philosophical systems have proved but mental trapeze performances, the theatrical basis is lost, the spiritual equally so. Man has gone through long and tremendous exertion without result, and he feels nauseated and bruised, as after a debauch with adulterated wine.

But man in this depressed condition is no especial stimulator of woman.

When the Romans felt this dejection, upon which the Decline followed, the Roman matrons became Christians or public prostitutes; that is, they turned from man as leader, in both ways,—one, inwardly, in the depths of her heart, the other outwardly in her mode of life. We stand now at the same point. Our mothers and grandmothers long since built for themselves private altars. To-day many women demand a position similar to man's and the freedom of love, and many others

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look anxiously about for something beyond their own selves and beyond man, to which they can fasten themselves. The Countess Schimmelmänn, Annie Besant and many others are examples

Whence comes this remarkable fact, appearing now with the same clearness as long ago in the great world-crisis of the declining Roman Empire?

It rests upon the deepest claim of woman's nature, which far transcends her sensual needs,—the demand for emotion. When man can no longer stimulate the emotional side of woman, she turns from him; for woman has her super-sensuous side as well as man. In him it manifests itself as creative energy; in her as the need of emotion.

And the man of to-day, standing at the crest of a wave of evolution, tired and over-excited, dulled and disappointed, has nothing to arouse the fundamental nature of woman.

A bright young woman, having received a letter from an admirer, was somewhat uncertain about its contents. She showed it to a feminine friend, who read it and exclaimed deprecatingly,—“These little men of to-day!”

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The same emotional necessity which impelled women three hundred years ago to denounce each other as witches, and avow themselves as such, now drives them into the movement for the emancipation of women. Both phenomena are the result of emotional cravings misplaced and diverted from their natural channels.

It is a despairing road and yet it is the only road which many see before them; and this they can only travel by deafening, with parrot phrases loudly spoken, the inward voice of their souls, that still, small voice which tells them this road leads precisely to the point where the present line of development has led man, —to absurdity.

But what else can they do? They must do something to get away from themselves. Many have a feeling that they would fly into pieces if forced to remain still.

The men of our time, even the strongest and most truly distinguished representatives of their sex, show, as we have said, the signs of fatigue and depression; especially is this true of the younger generation. Man has waged a long,

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hard, heroic battle,—the battle for mental freedom; and he has forfeited meanwhile his human freedom, which depends upon the possession of the soil he stands on. He feels that he no longer owns anything, not even himself! The next stage in such a recognition is the nervousness of powerlessness.

For this nervousness a great many causes are assigned. First, the blame is laid upon alcohol, and this is stormed against in public meetings; next, it is meat which is injurious, and the vegetarian creed is recommended; then youthful excesses are to blame, and man is almost brought to vow chastity until marriage, which is very often indefinitely postponed by his financial position. Only upon one point are all our learned and unlearned augurs united,—never by any chance to graze the real cause! always neatly to suggest the effect as cause!—the man cannot contain himself, because he does too much eating, drinking and loving!

Is it just possible that he only eats, drinks and loves irrationally because by means of these quite human stimulants he may now and then feel tolerably well con-

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tained? And in the interval, when his spiritual and material depression gain the upper hand, he feels pessimistic.

With woman it is different. Certainly we find chlorosis, nervousness and hysteria in all classes; as among men, these ailments arise more from mental than physical causes, and no journeys to bathing and health resorts can cure them. The only help is a cheerful courage which is not to be picked up in ball-rooms nor purchased of the apothecary.

But whereas the sufferings of man arise chiefly from exhaustion, those of the woman arise, above all, from restricted energies. Woman, as soon as she is upborne by a warm interest, has—even in the most ailing condition—far more endurance than man. She is tougher, harder to break than he; and what she thirsts for is expansion.

Always when the most difficult crises occur, we see the woman longing for a way out and seeking it. Where man's courage fails, hers begins. When there seems no more hope, woman's confidence sets in. No amount of work, at such times, makes her ill; it is only in inactivity that symptoms of illness and dis-

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integration appear in her. Long ago, in the greatest of all revolutions, it was the women who helped essentially the victory of the Christian idea. A great change is again at hand; but that which thus far has been laid in woman's outstretched hands is dead, not living.

Let us admit one thing. The movement for the emancipation of woman, which has been gaining ground for decades in England, America, Scandinavia, and now advances in Germany, is a misdirection of woman, based upon an erroneous idea of the trend of evolution; but considered in itself, it does not appear to be a symptom of degeneration in woman, but rather a sign of awakening consciousness of strength. Woman will not continue in the old way any longer; this much she has established. She will concentrate herself more upon herself; she will go more deeply into her own nature; in other words, she will return to her specific work and forget herself in her duty.

And her duty is to prepare the ground for a new and different race of men.

That was once the work of the Roman Christian matrons. Out of them arose a



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different race of men, different from their fathers, brothers and husbands; a race with other powers of endurance, a new outlook, and a different and new productiveness.

Every fruitful emotion in woman has a religious impulse;—without this motive woman becomes sterile.

But step for step, as man has lost the soil, he has lost his religion; and quite consistently, reflecting present conditions, he has arrived at ego-worship and intensified ego-worship. He expects to draw himself up into the heights by his own queue and hang himself on an imaginary peg in ether,—what he calls self-deliverance. For he has no ground to stand upon.

Out of the possession of the soil a new religion would arise, for, out of the earth sprout all productive religious energies. That these impulses cannot act, is the cause of the unrecognized disorder of the time.

The men of our time have a thirsting and languishing, a longing and seeking, a desire for something which they cannot attain.

It is present in miserable creatures as

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well as in the best. Many have died of it; others have been ruined by it. But now something which seemed long ago swept away by the prevailing conception of life, bursts out like warm spring wind, awakening and softening hearts, and melting souls. Even the most selfish ego-worship is only an expression of awakened expansiveness; for how can there be an ego-worship without a tu-worship?

Our present institutions are hard and impersonal, based upon the idea of profit. They must be overthrown in order that souls may melt. Women have tried to achieve this. They have not succeeded but they have made a beginning. In the following pages I shall sketch some of their attempts.

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There is a popular belief that in our times it is exceedingly easy for hidden talent to win to light and play a leading part. This must be conceded in regard to those gifts which are not connected with an intense inner life. Whoever discovers a new incandescent lamp, suggests a new method of exploiting his fellow men, visits and opens up to culture the North Pole,—so exceedingly useful and signifying so much to the material and mental welfare of mankind,—or provides our standing armies with new tools of murder for the preservation of international peace,—for him, the requisite means and consequent honors and distinctions will not be wanting. If we look at the intellectual leaders of this century, we may divide them into four groups, parallel to the divisions of modern industrial life; those who have become insolvent, those who have liquidated their debts, those who after some losses have withdrawn creditably upon their reserve,

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and those who have fraudulently obtained importance and respect.

But none, not one, has left his offspring wherewithal to build further. There is no inheritance from the fathers for the minds and hearts of the children, nor footing in our century for the growing generation. Each must to-day begin afresh, each enter life as a beggar; and it is pure accident with what kind of rags and tatters from all periods and civilizations he clothes his mind, or upon which of the margarines so stormily recommended in literature and the press, he nourishes his soul.

The broken curve is the mark of our century; it is an ending place, an offshoot, a margarine century, which cheats its hunger with warmed-over, freshly-garnished scraps and crumbs, and stares out into the void, tired and ill.

We have only to look at the "intellectual lights" which our times have produced, to perceive that the chief reason for their success and acceptance is their power of adaptation to the spirit of the time.

But what of those who cannot adapt themselves to crumbling conditions,—whose spirit outruns the present and

reaches into the future and the past,—who are not of those city-bred men, whose offspring, should they have any, die out in a generation or two, even as the “ideas” they conceive are cast aside by the next generation as debris, which the literary second-hand dealer rakes over and uses in “cheap editions” for the lower classes? What becomes of these others we do not know. It is certain they do not succeed. It is doubtful whether they ever become conscious of themselves; more doubtful because of the mental pressure which has been exerted throughout the whole century of freedom, uniformly and in all lands, towards a definite political and intellectual end, by the intellectual and social authorities who control the schools, universities and the press.

One consequence, however, of this uniform pressure can be clearly seen,—the malaise in the people of to-day; their uneasiness, their mania for moving from place to place, their nervousness, their desire to dull their senses, their lack of belief in anything and everything, especially in themselves,—the thought of suicide as a last resource and relief

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hanging over the lives of hundreds of thousands.

And if this is the fundamental note in the life of men, the adaptable as well as the unadaptable,—to what key is the life of sensitive woman tuned?

To the same discord, breaking off shorter and shriller because of her greater susceptibility, and rending her in soul, in nerves, in her whole feminine nature.

Two years ago, in "Six Famous Women," I sketched a number of eminent women who had made themselves widely felt and won distinguished recognition. Without the capacity of adapting themselves to the spirit and ideas of the time, they would not have won recognition nor influence; they would have remained unknown. But this so-called "modernness" in them, their capacity for accommodating themselves to the ephemeral movements of to-day, shattered them from within. One died; the others will perhaps outlive their popularity.

In another book—"Women and the Men Who Write about Them"—I have described some of the leaders of thought

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of to-day. Those of the number who have gained the wider recognition from their contemporaries, lead us to the absurd. They possess in high degree the power of adaptation to the "ideas" of the time, and those "ideas" are unfortunately dying out, one after another, before the bodily decease of their prophets.

Marie Bashkirtseff, and Sónya Kovalévsky, Anne Charlotte Edgren and Amalie Skram, George Egerton and Eleanora Duse, the literary-dramatic machine galvanized into a fleeting life; all possessed the power of adaptation and accommodated themselves to the "tenor" of modern life; so Ibsen and Björnson, Tolstoi and Strindberg and Heyse, excel in this respect, but their readers leave them at last more desolate in soul than when they came to their writings.

Below and behind all those who have made their way, stand those who have not arrived at anything, because they have not been able to adapt themselves. It is not, however, my task to consider such instances among men.

Among women they are not rare, and of those I have met, I have selected a

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few, and will try in the following pages to draw the outlines of their characters;—strange, crooked, extravagant lines often, of suppressed natures which suddenly expand or contract and wear deep and frequently disfiguring marks of the battle they unconsciously undertook and found too hard,—for no help came.

For the “leading minds” of our time have shown themselves utterly incapable of one thing,—to lead us women.

And if I were asked why, I should answer: Because in us all, whether we have children or not, whether we are wives or not, at some time—unless we are degenerate—the question rises, round which our mother instinct gathers—“What do we leave to our children? What do we give them to take with them into life as nourishing bread and sustaining content, upon which they can rest and struggle, live and die?” And when the inward answer to this question is—“Nothing,” then we turn our backs upon our leaders.

Then, when in searching anxiety we turn our gaze backward and ask: “What did our parents give us as nourishing bread and sustaining content?”—and meet



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here also the reply: "They had nothing to bequeath us, or we would never have gone to the guides which stand on every corner,"—we form the despairing resolution: "We ourselves will seek, and try to find something to give to those who come after us and from us!" Many who are childless feel all children as their own.

Those whom I shall depict in this chapter are seekers. The impulse to seek ruled them like an inner compulsion not to be restrained. They found nothing upon which they could lean; no man remained permanently their leader. Their peculiar characteristic was that they did not let themselves be incorporated in any movement, as did the "Six Famous Women" whom I have delineated; they did not lose their vital energy nor their peculiarities in organizations.

No, they remained themselves, even though this self could often be preserved only in caricature. They did not surrender their ego. Was it because they did not feel them as individual egos,—because each felt herself as one emanation from a great center, which drew her back into itself again? They did not

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succeed, or only in strange, far-away spheres about which people shrugged their shoulders and smiled. Or they only succeeded for a moment and then vanished again. They were lacking in the power of adaptation which is the chief requisite for general recognition. Or did their superiority consist precisely in this lack?

### I

#### THOSE WHO DIE BY THE WAY

There are lives which, as we survey them, seem to show the influence of a guiding hand and will; lives which seem predestined to pass in misery, misfortune and obscurity, yet they received most fully all that was needed for development and growth. He who has once stood still in the course of his existence, and looking back upon his life has suddenly discovered with beating heart a coherence where he had expected to find only fragments, chance and uncertain gropings,—who has asked himself: “How did I come this path, having no presentiment that it existed, nor that warm hands would receive me on the way, nor that the sun would shine upon

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it?"—he who has reached this point in his life has no more fear. Nor does he belong to himself thenceforth. He has beheld a vaster connection than that between his ego and himself, and knows that henceforth he will act, think, feel and live from deeper motives than personal ones. The limits of the ego are dispersed.

But such persons are rare. They break through the limits of the visible world, whether they live on unknown, or stand as feeble guides and far apart upon the human pathway.

This consciousness of being led is more common in women than in men. Woman frequently believes in a power controlling her for good or evil. And this inner goodness or evil manifests itself later, in the nature of her children.

This century has undermined much that has stood for ages. It has made man dependent upon himself, upon his finiteness, his ego, his consciousness. The curve is now ended and we can see what man's possession of himself means. It is as if one tore up a tree, turned its roots upward, and said: "Become air-

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rootlets and nourish yourselves on the atmosphere."

This century has also made woman dependent upon herself, upon her finiteness, her ego, her consciousness. It might as well have stood her upon her head and commanded her hair to take root in the earth; the position and task would not have been more unsuitable for her than her present task and position in life.

Well, woman is teachable! She understood that it was her moral duty to feel herself exalted and upheld by the new views, and she therefore felt elevated in the contemplation of her finiteness, her ego, her consciousness. Out of these three conceptions she began with her own hands to construct a life.

"Free competition in every direction" gave her, to be sure, a strong support, and with the tested word of freedom,—Help thyself!—she went to work.

Some years, a decade, perhaps two, went by, and now we see the borders of every road strewn with those who die on the way.

The hosts of these broken ones who have striven with an unsparing expendi-

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ture of strength, and have accomplished nothing, are legion. No one took them in, when they could no longer help themselves. Their ego glided out of their hands; their consciousness forsook them, and their finiteness stared at them and reflected back to them their withered, tired selves.

Whoever has been in a position to read many letters from women who are penetrated by the spirit of the times, would declare, with a shrinking of the heart, that not one is happy or even half-content. How clearly the different temperaments are revealed in these letters! How much of exaltation, perversity, or material aims, finds expression here! Yet all these letters are really cries for help from the drowning who are torn away and carried past in the night. Nothing can be done for them, for no one of them is submerged by a single definite misfortune. Economic stress, an inward upheaval and a tempestuous desire for happiness and joy,—these are the inspiring causes of all; and for these we should hardly hold any one of the writers responsible, as these three are signal marks of the time.

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Talented ones who died on the way, seekers who missed the goal or whose energies failed them, belonged formerly to the masculine sex. That is no longer the case. Now it is especially the feminine seekers who die on the way; and it is not alone the less gifted and weaker ones,—among them are some of the very finest natures. One such, who may serve as a type of many, known and unknown, I wish now to describe.

### II

#### UPON A STEAMER IN THE BOHUSLAN CLIFFS

Sea air! Sea smells! A fresh wind making one at once so strong and so tired; a plashing and spraying and rushing that comes from far, far away; little white wave-caps, in an endless glistening, flowing blue, ever remaining and ever passing,—now green, like watered silk, now silver like moonlight, then bright deep blue and dull gray; the coasts vanish, and the ship steers straight into the sparkling blue light under the white, opalescent sky.

I sit and gaze and breathe, drinking in the scene and the salt air, at once

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aroused and soothed. The water becomes bluer—more blue, the dome of the heaven ever deeper; Goteborg disappears behind the projecting red cliffs, and the steamer cuts sharply through the foam, the fine, salty spray flying up thickly. I look and look, and breathe and breathe, till I only see a golden sparkling and only feel myself as floating in the air.

The steamer puts in to Marstrand, where tiresome pleasure-seekers stand on the shore; sickly yellow faces or apoplectic red ones greet us; shrill voices scream, deep bass tones sounding between. . . . Suddenly it all vanishes again and there is only the sparkling, glowing, rolling blue, above and below.

It rushes and rolls and sparkles on,—I think I must have slumbered. The ship passes through a narrow sound, winding in between granite cliffs like red sealing-wax, runs past quays of mighty wooden piles and shining, scoured escarpments, runs out again around a red granite hill, mountain-high, and straight into an infinite silver light. Through that silver light another steamer draws a blue furrow, a new granite cone glows ahead of us almost blood-red; the steamer seems

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to merge into it and is gone. Sharper and more salt grows the ocean smell; crying gulls rise up from the water like flying foam; a pilot-boat with red stripes in the white sail cuts obliquely past, swifter than a gull's flight. Did I really see it?

Further northwards we go, in the direction of Christiania. Ever more harsh and monotonous becomes the scenery. Lysekil, whence come the finest anchovies, is behind us. Most of the passengers have landed. The land is nothing but a great heap of stones washed by the sea. Not a tree, not a bush, not a green leaf nor a grass-blade to be seen. And no roads nor paths. Boats are the means of conveyance here. All the colors of nature have vanished except a steel blue and a dull, blood red. Here and there lonely red houses stand on round, smooth, polished red cones, clinging with their four corner posts to the stone, and lime-washed with a color like congealed blood. Split mackerel hang drying on long lines and fill the air with their biting odor. A misstep on these narrow cliffs—and the steel blue closes together over a human being. Nature here has nothing con-



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ciliating, nothing beguiling, no exuberance, no transitions. But she is great! Blue and red!—the hot waves of organic life enveloped in the blue of the two primeval elements.

"Hilma Strandberg lived here," said a voice behind me.

The name was spoken with a peculiar emphasis. I turned. Behind me sat an unknown gentleman in conversation with my husband.

"What was she doing here in this desolation?" asked the latter.

"She was a telephone girl," answered the stranger. "She came from the West Coasts. Very fine family,—but she would not accept anything from them. She wished to support herself. And here she sat through nine months of winter and three of summer, telephoning about the prices of mackerel, herring and lobster catch."

"I have read only one of her books," I heard my husband say.

"She wrote only one. She married."

There was silence behind me. My husband seemed to have no desire to learn more. A cigar was lighted, with great exertion, behind my back, and the

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talk turned upon good, better and best brands of cigars.

I, however, wished to know more, and turning around, let the stranger be introduced to me. He was a pastor's son from the Coasts. He was to go ashore at Fjallbacka, the next landing-place, and return home. He was one of those numerous sons of Swedish pastors who rule like petty kings in their parishes—parishes the size of a German principality, with the revenues of a small princely appanage. In this young man's veins coursed the wandering blood of the vikings, who once won these Bohuslan coasts from Normandy and laid waste the west shores of Europe. It was diluted in the veins of this tall, slender, lightly-built figure with the birdlike, blond head, and clear blue eyes in the gentle face; but it was none the less the old adventurous blood. He was never settled anywhere and could stay long in no one place. He had rowed in an open row-boat from Goteborg across the North Sea to the German Coasts, and was famous in sporting circles as "the great rower." He had wandered through England and crossed America, stealing rides

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on the railroad trains when his money gave out, in constant danger of being discovered and ejected from the train. He was a gentleman in appearance and manner, with almost a touch of the dandy; but under the elegant light gray summer ulster were hidden trained, tough and enduring muscles, and in his slow, keen glance sparkled the indifferent frivolity and the spontaneous warmth of the vabanque-player. While I drank my tea and he his cognac, he related to me the history of the remarkable young girl, Hilma Strandberg.

This recital made me eager to read her book, and her book made me wish to tell her story here.

She was one of those whose natures are planned to be something complete. Young, restricted, inexperienced as she was when she wrote her first book, in that book she is neither young, restricted nor inexperienced. In the ten pictures of the Swedish West Coasts which she grouped under the title "Westwards," was an entirely firm, strongly marked personality.

The singular and almost the only peculiarity of this young girl was that she

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had no illusions. The world stood before her, like nature about her, in bright blue and blood red. All the haze of softer distinctions existed as little for her as for these coasts. For Hilma Strandberg, life was clothed in the deep blue of tranquil self-assurance or the blood-red of inescapable Fate. And as from the beginning Nature had given her fully formed views of life, so she had from the beginning also a finished style,—the simple, firm style of maturity. In this young girl was everything at first hand which great masculine geniuses in great civilized countries usually attain only after long effort. Sharply, clearly, directly, so she saw and so she wrote; cold-blooded and unafraid, like a sailor between the cliffs.

What she depicts in "Westwards" is the life in these narrow sounds and dangerous water-ways; the life of hard, reticent people, who make little ado over distress and death. The pictures of plain, homely life drawn by the best Middle European writer, seem colorless and weak compared with the great tragic-ness in the simple realism of this young girl, for whom an individual life is like a

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small red cliff which the infinite ocean laves when good-humored, covers with billows in its climbing anger, lashes and rages against in the uproar of storm. Just as old crags disappear and new ones arise and no one counts the one nor the other, so the individual existences appear and disappear, each as lonely as a crag in mid-ocean.

If these people suffer, however, they also enjoy. When the herring come streaming in, and the nets break with the catch, then the champagne corks crack and the ten-crown pieces fly, and poor women prink themselves in silk handkerchiefs and aprons. Then winter comes with the long nights and the pockets are empty again, while often there is not even whisky to go with the salted fish.

As nature about them is pitiless and wild, so the spirit of these people is adventurous and unbending. And like all this which she described was Hilma Strandberg herself, the telephone operator of the West Coasts.

From this same Bohuslan in the two colors, red and blue, came also Emilie Flygare-Carlen, Sweden's greatest woman

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writer. Various accidents and care for the support of her family had made her a productive writer. And womanly cares of another kind took the pen out of Hilma Strandberg's hands. She was, in the opening of her career, by far the most gifted of Swedish woman-authors, and she was the first to disappear from their ranks. For she found what others did not;—occupation for her entire woman-nature.

The last and greatest tale in her book is called "Draussen am Elf!" In it she describes the destiny of two generations—father and son—of the working class. Anders Rothberg, the father, was overseer in a saw-mill,—a quiet, orderly, industrious and aspiring man. He preferred to be with people who stood above him, not so much because it flattered his vanity as because something in himself forced him always to rise above the place he held in the world. "As a young man he dreamed great dreams of becoming something; but this something was so indefinite, his capacities were so divided,—a little drawing, a little violin playing, some higher mathematics,—and thus the time went by and the workman's son had

to choose a trade for breadwinning." He became a carpenter and married an ordinary woman, commonplace in origin and spirit, who fairly hated "aristocracy." Their son, Oscar Friedrich, must study. The father was often seized with actual anguish at the thought that Oscar Friedrich might stick fast at the same point where he had stuck,—going no higher.

The son was like the father. Many times he was seized with a raging desire to take hold—to concentrate all his energies upon one point and begin at once. But with what? Ah, that was not at all so clear to him. He had enthusiasms for so many things, for all which his fancy seized upon in succession. The injustice of a teacher spoiled for him his inclination to study. After working a while in the lumber yard he had a mind to become an artist. The father gathered his shillings and sent him to Stockholm. Oscar Friedrich worked industriously, but at a certain level he stopped; he could not advance; there was no further development. Shy and retired, the workman's son neither found nor sought companions; the class consciousness stood in his way. He returned again to the lumber yard,

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working meanwhile in the private studio of an artist who advised him to become a lithographer.

He became a good lithographer, but not one of the best. At a certain point he stuck here too. He was always solitary and married late. Like his father he was a tall man, stooping a little in the shoulders and frail in health, always well dressed and immaculately neat. The girl whom he married was—Hilma Strandberg.

And Hilma Strandberg reviewed him in his narrowness and limitations,—the workingman's son, with the workingman's horizon and brain, a good, tire-some man, a gentle fellow among the wild rakes of the West Coasts;—she placed him before the reader without a touch of sentimentality, apparently without sympathy. How came she, the capable, ever to accept him, the incapable?—the daughter of an old house, to accept the workingman?—the woman with a future, the man with no future? Nothing was further from her than extravagance or eccentricity.

They married and went to America. In Boston and Philadelphia he supported



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himself scantily by his handicraft, and she worked upon a newspaper. Then they were lost sight of. My informant tried to trace them, thoroughly but in vain, as he passed through these cities. They were no longer there. No one could tell him where they had gone.

Who can say why a woman, feeling herself bound, breaks her bonds in one way instead of another? The important thing for her is that they be broken. Many girls marry to be taken care of; a few, in order to get air. Hilma Strandberg saw before her the ocean and behind her the cliffs. Her book had won recognition,—but it did not help her to escape. There she sat; there she might remain. And everywhere without was the rich, great world which the human being wishes to have known before he turns his back upon it. Write more books? To what end? She had written what she had; she had nothing more. She wanted to have, not to give. And Oscar Friedrich was a good fellow and dissatisfied like herself. There was Viking blood in her too. They joined their fates together and traveled across the sea that beat against their crags, and disappeared from

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view like the point of the crag in high billows. Was her own life too like those she described in "Westwards,"—a boat that overturns in a winter night?

### III

Years went by. One day, during a temporary stay in Denmark, I heard again the name, Hilma Strandberg, spoken by a chance acquaintance, and received in answer to my question the reply: "She is in consumption. With the help of patrons we have brought her back to Sweden and placed her in a sanitarium. But she longs constantly for her husband. He is supporting himself in America and lives with his parents, who followed him there. Good heavens! they cannot support themselves together! Here she began at once to write again, and can find a market."

"Had she no children?"

"Two or three. They are dead."

I could not ask further. What I had heard was enough. One shattered existence more brought clearly to my consciousness. But my informant did not forget me. After she returned home I received one day a packet of letters

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written by Hilma Strandberg to friends in her native land, and from time to time, articles from her pen as they appeared in the papers and journals.

These letters and two or three stories, all drawn from her very own life and written with her life's blood, let me understand enough and more than enough.

Something peculiar, a personal restraint lay over all these utterances.

It was like a person trying to regain consciousness,—as if between the self to which she gave expression and the self which she felt, there stood a wall, rendering the communication imperfect. The self which found expression spoke clearly and plainly and was often hard; and the self which experienced quivered silently, like a suffering animal who has no means of expression save a mute shrinking.

Her impulse towards communication was boundless,—closely written letters of sixteen or twenty pages, often crossed and almost illegible. One saw in these letters that she had no one near with whom to talk freely and clearly. There were descriptions of American impressions, concise and perspicuous, such as are seldom published, and beside them,

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long, groping, aimless outpourings; soliloquies in which she strives to come into agreement with herself,—about what? She did not herself know. She felt only a whirling galop of vanities about her, which they called life, reality, fighting one's way, duty, and so forth. It was like a merry-go-round upon which she must spring, where everything depended upon jumping up and catching a flying wooden horse. But she never mounted it. She only heard the rattling, shrill grind-organ of material interests, and saw the wild chase after fictitious realities whirling past her, and cried to herself: "To-morrow I shall do it too. I shall join in it to-morrow surely. I must go into the thick of human life!" But it was and ever remained for her only empty human life, into which she could not go, where there was no place for her.

Her husband did what he could,—peaceful, patient, unenterprising. Now he had work as a lithographer, now none; in the forefront where money is made, he never came. One can see so well that what cut them both off from all prosperity was their merit. Both were too fine, too much children of real culture

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for the roughness of the American struggle for life or American pleasures. Both personalities were already too strong to be easily roughened. And for her, especially, stood in the way the inborn pride of good origin, which is so much harder for a woman to give up than for a man. Here and there she took part in a congress or exhibition as a reporter. The remarkable freshness and acuteness of perception and description were obstacles here;—she involuntarily drew the stupid self-sufficiency and empty, much-occupied air of the leading woman's rights women and other eminent persons, and her relations with the papers naturally came to a hasty end.

One child seemed inclined to cling to life. She found great joy in it; her heart, drawn together like a hardened muscle by the realistic ideas of the time, swelled and expanded and her soul began to melt. But during a very hot summer it died in the course of a day. Overworked and exhausted, her own cook, child-nurse and washerwoman, she did mechanically what she could and watched the child almost apathetically as it died. Such a moving sketch as the little story of the

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death of her child in its almost dull bitterness, I have seldom read.

With the child's death, something broke,—her own power of resistance. She wished to go home, away from America. She hoped in her native land to find a place also for the poor partner of her sorrowful life. But she herself found only a place in a sanitarium, through the aid of friends; there she passes year after year, superfluous in her country as in the foreign land, an invalid, whose pride may now at last be broken through the self-interest which continual illness generally creates.

She who still lives without living was one of the greatest feminine observers and delineators. Of the women writers who have won a name in Europe, very few can measure themselves with Hilma Strandberg in natural gifts,—if I except her countrywoman, Selma Lagerlof, whose Wermlandic heart would like to thaw and melt, but finds no material—no substance to fasten upon and make itself live thereby,—a soft Catholic heart in the cold, pietistic, free-thinking north.

There have not been many periods when the gifted woman possessed as

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much inward worth as now. There have been still fewer periods when that which was offered her as substance and content was worth so little as now. The degenerate spirit of our time, in its stupid egoism and its fear of the secret sources of life, which cannot be measured, taken up, marked or catalogued, has set a kind of premium upon egoism and upon the hardening of the woman in order to steel her for the struggle of life. But only feminine material of inferior value is educated to be great and "steeled" thus. Woman herself is an ever-flowing source of life, which is not here for its own sake and will not be hardened. When like Hilma Strandberg she lets herself be caught by concrete realism and wishes to become hard for the sake of living out her ego, she becomes merely sterile. But the blame does not lie with her.

### I

#### THE OLD MAID

In all nations and races there is a fraction of the people vulgarly described in the common saying: "He smells neither sweet nor foul." Among the German races the number of these people is per-

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haps exceptionally large,—the German representing in his nature a moderate climate. Out of this number were recruited, formerly, the old maids and bachelors. They “remained in the home” and were handed down with the rest of the inherited inventory to the member of the family who continued the house.

In the country homes, everywhere where the farming class is preserved intact, we still find such “honored young men” or “virtuous maidens,” who make up for any lack of personal feeling by their intensified family feeling, and can as little be driven away from their homes by good or evil as a domesticated cat can be driven away. And since in one home not more than one family can dwell, it is a matter of course that they remain single, and after a long, industrious and more or less complaining life, die as honest celibates.

To such life-long youths and maidens, the renunciation is not, as a rule, a hard necessity or bitter compulsion, but a fairly natural condition. They are quite satisfied. If one or the other becomes independent through inheritance and “could have it,” they do not marry even then; and in cases where extensive



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property interests render a spouse indispensable, I have often observed that they do not easily renounce their solitary state. Certainly the feminine resistance is somewhat weaker and more readily overcome by flattery and perseverance.

In the cities, the uncle who remains at home as partner in the business, fellow-worker or overseer, has ceased to exist. We can at most only remember him as belonging to the period of our childhood. Also the maiden aunt, who, as head cook, sick-nurse, child-nurse and teacher, attained a far-reaching competence as adviser of the first rank, is no more. She has disappeared, together with the prosperity of the town family; as the uncle disappeared with the stability of the town business. Instead of these, we have now in most families a brother who does not get on well in the world and must be shaken off, and one or more still unmarried daughters.

The inorganic idea of the family, which is an achievement of this century, is shown in nothing else so clearly as in the pushing off of these members which were predestined for the maintenance of the family rather than the building up of

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one. In this ill-natured shaking off of the tree's sterile fruit, is manifested still more strikingly the general economic impoverishment of the families.

In all large families there are several members who evince no special power, either in perceptive faculty or temperament, in sexuality or imagination. If they are sons they must go forth, good or bad. If they are daughters the mothers begin early to complain that "they are not noticed." Whether they are pretty or ugly seems of little consequence; they bore people. They are overlooked at balls, and on the street gentlemen do not recognize them again; they have no bosom friends among the girls, the half-grown boys do not fall in love with them, nor marriageable men pay court to them; and in the shops the busy clerks let them wait unserved. In the days when marriage was not an affair of "love," but of family arrangement, these were married off also, and made their husbands neither happy nor unhappy. Now they are "left over." They are the born old maids.

That they suffer, under it in their woman-nature is hardly the case. Their blood is not so full, their fancy has not

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the sensibility, their temperament not the energy to feel the necessity of love, painful or compelling. Their sensuality is slight and indefinite, only temporarily directed towards definite persons. But they have the instinct of attachment and the need of assurance; and what is easily aroused in such souls and can then swell to a surprising strength is envy. When to such a nature is added the increased egoism which philosophers and writers have carefully built up and magnified for decades, there often develops in them—not through impulse but through the substitute, reflection—a devouring and barren longing for the joys of life denied to them. This, through lack of occupation and the uprooting from the family life, may lead beyond attacks of religious fervor to the fixed idea, i. e., to periodical insanity.

It is natures like these, with a minus of sexual life and therefore a surplus of bitterness and self-righteousness, which for some decades have held themselves up as the standard of "sound relations" in public life, in literature, art, science, and political economy, and have played the leading rôles in the woman-movements

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through the world,—when these are not combined with free love, and sometimes even then! For such natures the cloisters formerly stood open, a welcome place of refuge where these, men or women, lived harmless to themselves and to others; the suppression of the cloisters closed to them this refuge, like so many more; and forced out into life, they occupied themselves in ways whose fuller discussion would demand another place and ampler room than this.

A nature of this kind, and quite typical, has been delineated by a feminine hand, with an exactness of knowledge and sharpness of detail which only the exaltation of the ego, so highly developed in our day, can give to the view and the organs of perception. This sketch is in Gabrielle Reuter's story,—“Of Good Family. The Misfortunes of a Spinster.”

### II

A remarkable book! A book over which one asks himself how it came to exist. For how can a woman bring herself to confess the never-confessed? Not that the most intimate avowals are so difficult for the woman who has had and possessed;

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we have sufficient proofs that they are only too easy; but these are chiefly pre-arranged confessions, to make oneself interesting.

Here, however, the contrary is the case. Here one is depicted, one who has never desired. It is all honest through and through. Here the grooved imprint of decades is shaken off by a firm will, which in silent, mute exaltation frees itself from all compromises. A human being has gone about with a ghost on her back through her childhood, through her youth, through her maturity; — without having had a childhood, youth or maturity, for that which went by these names was only a process of withering. Now she throws the goblin off, turns and faces it; she is determined to see for herself how it looks; and at the same time she comes to a knowledge of herself. At present that is all she wants.

It is a North German temperament that is revealed in this book; matter-of-fact, sober, without impulsiveness or expansive warmth. I might even say, there is a touch of Prussian discipline in it. The author, whom I once met cursorily, has the typical appearance of the higher

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official's daughter,—large, slender, somewhat angular, with a regular, careworn face and conventional, constrained manner. Only the burning eyes and hot lips make protest; but consumptives have just such eyes and lips.

Briefly, to sum up the strongest impression of this book; it is that while reading it, one reflects upon oneself. Others will feel this,—especially women and those young girls who have not yet become women. It is not a man's book, for it deals almost exclusively with those afflictions of the woman which the genuine man does not, will not, cannot see; firstly, because he is indifferent to them; secondly, because they are tiresome to him; thirdly, because he at once tries to break of them the woman with whom he comes into relation. They are the sufferings which make the barrier between man and woman,—the dull twilight, unconscious coyness and inner defenses, the indifference of the unawakened senses, and the purposeless, consuming waiting.

The type described in this book is the girl, who, when married, becomes only a mother. The husband is a second-

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any thing. I remember, when I was confirmed, hearing a schoolmate, a good-natured, robust creature, say enthusiastically: "Oh, I should so like to have children! I should like to have ten children,—but no husband?" Accordingly, she accepted later a little, homely, sallow man, the first who offered himself, and as I wished her happiness, she cried with animation: "How could one be anything but happy when she is the chosen out of a thousand?" This bit of statistics in regard to the number of the unchosen was perhaps exaggerated. But she had no time to stop on that account, for now the dear little ones came promptly trooping along in rapid succession.

The young girl delineated in this book is in nowise remarkable. Agatha is the ordinary and typical young girl of "good family." She thinks nothing, feels nothing; she does not wish to be noticed, and she makes no marked impression upon any one. To sum up her life,—she is submerged in other lives. She has no experiences, external or internal, and she exercises upon no man a deep personal attraction. That is partly the fault of

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the circle to which she belongs, where a young girl is taken into consideration by marriageable men only when she is a "good match." Agatha is not a good match in her first youth, and in her second—after her father has paid the debts of the lieutenant, her brother, with the mother's fortune,—she is none at all; upon ascertaining which, her one suitor, an elderly new-baked district sheriff, promptly withdraws. No one has ever been betrayed for a single moment into doing something bright or stupid on her account, and very naturally so, for when anything "which young girls should not know" chanced to come under her eyes, she not only looked "prim," but really felt so. To be sure, she had once in her life been in love—of course without the object of her love ever suspecting it,—with a tolerably demoralized artist, who, to her horror, had a child by an actress, whereupon she lost her love for him. She is really more than usually prim.

One might suppose that a young girl like this had no inner life, and men generally do suppose so. The value of this book is that it reveals this inner life. It is not



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complex, certainly; it is very simple, it consists simply in waiting.

Agatha's education was planned in the somewhat colorless manner of the higher bourgeoisie, with the expectation that the young girl would grow up into wife and mother. Agatha also had conceived herself thus literally, and as Frau Dornheim presented her at her confirmation with the "Woman's Life as Girl, Wife and Mother," with fitting illustrations by Paul Thurman, she felt herself in a measure dedicated for that which must now come.

But nothing came. Only a second and a third generation after her, who displaced her at balls. Agatha was still always girl; of wife and mother, not a sign.

One day Agatha coughs blood. This is just after she has learned that her secret love, the modern painter, is father incognito. The family physician assures them it is of no consequence, only the bursting of a vein from some excitement or other. Agatha recovers and becomes pious; but she makes no better progress with her piety than she had in attaining wifehood; in a higher official's household

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one must above all things avoid making oneself conspicuous. Gradually Agatha ceased from piety; it had no meaning, it was altogether empty.

She had nothing to do but to economize. The small parental household went of itself, although with all sorts of little frugal cares. She had nothing to hope for, nothing to remember, nothing even to wish. Since the year of her confirmation her life had passed in a growing depression. The one charm in this life—a charm mingled with constant exasperation,—was her sister-in-law Eugenie, the daughter of a rich cigar manufacturer. Eugenie was an ordinary, pretty, matter-of-fact, rather good-natured woman, of coarse and robust vitality, attractive to all men through her intelligent coquetry; as wife, never tiresome; a solicitous mother; by nature so practically constituted that nothing in life remained mysterious to her and she went towards her marriage with more quiet unconcern than the gay young lieutenant, her husband.

The years pass. Agatha grows thin and becomes an old maid. As she becomes more noticeably delicate she is sent to

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a bathing resort. And one day Agatha prepares for her acquaintance the first surprise.

Agatha is raving mad!

She is brought to an insane asylum and later to a sanitarium for nervous diseases, and modern science scores another of its triumphs, for Agatha gradually becomes so reasonable that she finds a heartfelt joy in crochet-work, and eventually rises to the dignity of a collector—though only of crochet-patterns. Let us hope she does not again from time to time give modern science opportunity for new triumphs in combating such a deeply-rooted evil as the impulse to become wife and mother.

Such is the outline of this book, a remarkable and valuable contribution to the history of present culture.

Is the life of the family daughter really so starved? many will question. Is marriage really the great stake in a girl's life? Is this Agatha, who begins to love the elderly all-the-world's suitor merely because he seems to have serious intentions, really so typical?

I must unfortunately answer to all these questions: Yes!

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Let no one, therefore, complain of woman or her nature. She is not lowered by this,—as many of her sisters would assert,—she only protects herself by it as well as she can; she but concentrates, even though she be the weakest individual, upon her central point, because every other kind of womanly expansion is denied her.

Our present society, our form of society, is not in condition to create anything organic or to shape anything out of the organic. It is itself in process of dissolution and can only effect dissolution. It works eagerly for the relinquishment of masculine branches of work to the woman, and promotes in dress, manner, and position the masculinity, or, if that be too harsh a word, the unsexing of woman. It expropriates the farmer, and attempts by soup-houses, night-asylums, widow's mites and care of the poor, to keep the unemployed proletarians hovering between life and death. Everything which is attributable to a wilful and intentional shifting of the equilibrium, it excuses with the theory of overpopulation; overpopulation of the cities, overcrowding of the professions, overpop-

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ulation in the families, etc. As soon as something goes wrong anywhere, science must declare it the result of an inevitable natural law and pronounce it holy.

It is highly characteristic of this age that whole ranks of productive population and the half of productive humanity—the women—are cut off from the exercise of their fitting and natural functions. Among others, one natural sphere of activity for woman is compassion.

Not every woman can find room for the full expansion of her sexuality. Not every woman has the strong sexual need of it, as a literature speculating in sexual instigation would at present like us to believe; but every woman—in so far as she is not degenerate—has a deep instinct to rise above and escape from her ego. This is the fundamental impulse of motherhood.

A woman can become a mother without this instinct, but when it dwells in her, she will be mother in a super-sensual manner, in that she will feel all suffering as though it were borne by her children, and to all who suffer she will long to be

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a tending, comforting, loving mother. This, in our time, is strictly prohibited to her. She cannot take hold, help, soothe, set straight, where she feels there is need, because there are no organizations existing for such work, into which she could enter. The spirit of the age throws every one back upon himself. Woman also is taught to live egoistically. And yet, for every woman of large vitality—and by this I mean only those who could bring forth a generation of robust children—the egoistic happiness is no happiness. Yes, even the intensest love-life is still not happiness. For happiness, the full expansion of all one's latent powers is necessary.

The woman of to-day is condemned to idleness or to unproductive and for the most part useless work. Whether the superfluous daughter sits aimlessly at home, her unoccupied thoughts circling around one of the fixed ideas of the time till she becomes dizzy from it, or whether, as beloved or wife, she becomes an article of luxury for the man, the end will be the same: flightiness, hysteria, or some other of the various steps in the long ladder of degeneration.

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### I

#### THE SAMARITAN

For those women of our time who escape the constant, if sometimes latent, strain caused by the specter of material necessity, there lies in wait another specter, seizing upon many with even stronger grasp,—the omnipresent specter of ennui. Material uncertainty is at least uncertain, one can hope to avert or escape from it, there is a certain stimulation in it which keeps one awake and alive; but for those who tread the golden path of wealth or high birth there is not even this stimulus. Their life is, according to human conception, safe, and thus robbed for the most part of the charm of accident. The young girl who is led into this path of life knows beforehand what will meet her there. In the course of a year she has learned all that the art of the tailor and the invention of the dealer in luxuries can accomplish, and also what these same arts can make of the gentlemen of her social circle. She feels clearly, too, that most of these gentlemen only favor her, the equal born, with the exuberance of their temperaments in the

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rarest instances, and most often then when she—the young girl—is unable to make anything of the nature of this temperament. Whatever they possess of fire, folly, tenderness and amusing qualities benefits the sirens of the podium and the secret circle especially educated for those who serve Aphrodite; when they have left this temple and her priestesses, they often urgently need marriage as a refuge.

We have now had twenty-five years of European peace; war, the chief stimulant of the high-born classes, has been lacking. In the absence of other anxieties, pure physical anxiety is the principal impulse toward those sudden expansions of feeling and spontaneous approaches of men and women of equal birth, in which the generous and warm sympathies are aroused.

In the world of finance, with its external collisions, there is almost nothing to awaken these feelings, and nowhere else is the young woman doomed to so superficial a life. The convulsions and underminings which formerly came violently upon mankind and so won for him sympathy, now come, sneaking and concealed, effecting isolation and avoidance



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where they once called forth interest and the sudden outpouring of love.

The young girl of wealth and social position is insulated from life; she sees its deep red, its beating pulse, its sweet surprises and sudden disclosures, from afar like a pale phantasmagoria, or it passes before her in the distorted reflections of half-forbidden, fashionable reading, and she returns every evening to her own inward void. She may live love romances if she wishes to, and later, when married, she can, if she likes, make up by the number of her love affairs for their lack of variety; but that deep, healthy restoration which the staking of one's whole being upon the fate of another in the hour of danger brings—that moment of bliss when all the inner fountains gush forth and body and soul are so glowing that they no longer perceive external cold and could walk naked in winter frost without noticing it,—these remain hidden from her. And yet it is these for which she pines; this inward salvation for which she reaches out.

Externally, she is only permitted to move in prescribed forms, and she feels with deadly weariness that only pre-

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scribed feelings meet and will continue to meet her. Many young girls have in the first years an almost frantic pleasure in adorning themselves, but it changes suddenly to indifference when they realize that the charm of their adorned persons, which surprises themselves, awakens no corresponding emotion in the men they meet. Dress, as an aim in itself, is the mania of the empty-minded woman and even she needs to be stimulated in her enjoyment by the envy of conquered rivals.

In the weariness of their disappointment many of the most promising young women revolt from marriage, in which they expect only a lukewarm affection. Precisely in those circles where no material obstacles exist many of the prettiest and healthiest women remain single. And when, after unenjoyed enjoyments, festivities, distinctions, proposals, etc., a constantly increasing and more suffocating depression overspreads them,—when body and soul gradually lose their resisting powers, then the pretty one becomes pious and the healthy, delicate.

They look about them for something which can give their idle days a purpose,

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the emptiness of their existence a meaning, which can restore their weakened vital energies; something which can release them from the interminable society of their ego,—a duty, a sacrifice, or a diversion which they can clothe in these fine names.

Their womanly instincts, so long warped, repressed and cheated, waken in their original strength. The instincts of motherhood, which consist in bearing, enduring, waiting, helping, sympathizing, and which had never been granted free outlet and expansion because their owners had lost faith in motherhood in their own cases, are now turned to others. They feel personally and strongly, in their own bodies, the tortures of starving mothers, suffering children, and unemployed fathers, the whole misery of the poor and the robbed, of undeserved want and unhealthy trade, out of which the golden ground is beaten whereon capital and the high-born aristocracy walk. And they yearn to help, out of a wild desire which is really to help themselves, to find peace, to get relief from the pain which they,—reflecting on the suffering around them,—feel

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as if in the body of the child they do not bear.

But how to succeed, where to take hold, by what means to find a way to the confidence of the estranged classes of the people, or upon what to concentrate? For those who have looked beneath the smooth, polished surface of police and state, human suffering is like an infinite, black, welling ocean, and the help of the individual is like a nutshell on these waters. Women who are endowed with a strong sense of the direct and practical see this at a glance, and many do not try at all to take hold of the impossible, especially in Protestant lands, but with clenched hands fight back the pain and seek to forget again what they have seen and felt. Gradually the impressions are erased, but the women also are undone and turned into those marred, ruined, peculiar, comfortless, indifferent skeptics, whom one meets with increasing frequency among women and quite young girls, and from whom one shrinks with a shudder, as if from contact with a corpse.

Others, without considering, without looking a second time for fear of seeing too deeply, take hold simply and bring help

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to the spot where they see need. And if they succeed with greater or less exertion in bringing relief to this one point, helping a single time or more, they feel it go through their whole being like a life-stream of health and energy; their spirits are cheered as if by the sun of personal fortune. For the ego is no such solitary, selfish, self-sufficing thing as the philosophy of the last centuries, down to its latest earnest product, Nietzsche, and its latest humorous product, Stirner, would have us believe. The ego is only a form of continuity; and especially the feminine ego has no point at which it can draw a line and content itself with pure individuality.

On the contrary the expansion of the feminine ego is so strongly directed towards those who are near her and exactly under her eyes, that she does not or will not perceive that they are limited by the general social relations and depend upon them; she therefore considers as effective the off-hand and isolated aid which can be rendered by an individual or a few individuals. So the good souls work away with all their might to aid individuals, never consider-

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ing that the only effective and lasting improvement is that which results from a general, well-conducted organization,—an international organization, one might say. The Church represented such an one in earlier times, with its institutions through which the purely personal was brought into connection with the universal. For some centuries now, and especially in Protestant lands, all attempts at care of the poor and improvement of their condition have been fruitless, surely the fault of the basis upon which they are undertaken.

In the preceding chapters, I have already indicated upon the background of the time the portrait of the personality whose characteristics and social limitations will be shown more clearly in the following pages.

### II

Through an apparent mistake of a specialist in nervous diseases, a mistake which seems to have favored a suit charging insanity, and through the attacks of a sensational paper, the widest publicity was given to a name and life which could hardly have been destined for this kind

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of fame. In 1894, Countess Adeline Schimmelmänn, former lady of honor to the Empress Augusta, and descended from that wealthy race of Counts of this name which had furnished one of the first and most generous patrons of Schiller, was lured into the county hospital of Copenhagen, during a stay in that city, and there detained in spite of her urgent protests, on the plea of mental derangement. After a time she was transferred from the unpeaceful county hospital to the quieter insane asylum at Vordingborg. The physician here soon dismissed her with an attestation that he could discover no symptoms of mental disease.

After she had escaped another attempt to send her to a private asylum, and the Danish papers had published column-long articles, without ever entirely clearing up the details of the affair, the countess was herself seized with an impulse to give testimony. She printed a small pamphlet, written simply and honestly, and spoke publicly before the Baptists in Aalborg and the Methodists in Copenhagen, since the pietistic "Inner Mission" would not open its rooms to her.

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What she said did not amount to much. She related in a clear voice and in the simplest words how she had come to Jesus. Her story is like a hundred others, and gives one the impression that the countess intentionally kept herself to the level of her audience. Only one feature is of interest, showing the womanly feeling of this lady who had performed masculine work throughout nine years. She told how she had struggled for love of Jesus without being filled with it: "I had determined to love Jesus; I worried myself about it, but it did no good; I always felt that I did not love him enough. Then one day it came to me—'The great thing is not that you love Jesus but that He loves you; when you really understand that Jesus loves you, it will follow of itself that you love Him.' " Here, I think, we reach the central point of this personality,—the feminine need of being surrounded by a warmth which is here sublimated to the warming love of the Son of God. As soon as this has penetrated her imagination, all is well; the imperturbable balance is gained, the woman satisfied, healed, and proof against all outward shocks.



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One rarely reads records from a woman's pen which display such uniform firmness and strength of will as the short account of the previous nine years, which the countess published immediately after her release from Vordingborg, and therefore after a very severe spiritual shock.

One feels how greatly the psychiatrist of the county hospital had miscalculated in his treatment of this woman. In this small pamphlet all is quietly revealed; if the woman is insane, it is certainly in a fashion for which asylums have neither cures nor cells. Assuredly not pre-eminent in intellect, but endowed with clear, good, practical sense, one-sided and strong, with an overflowing good heart, this woman, disdaining the soft life of a great lady, had an instinctive leaning toward the deep, powerful, dangerous primeval sensations in which the pulse-beats of life are like the blows of a hammer. These primeval sensations did not fall to her share as a wife and mother, perhaps because her nature demanded more than the times could give, but she found them unexpectedly under rough, half-savage conditions from which any

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other lady of rank would have fled in squeamish fear and dismay.

The well-known pastor and writer of religious tracts, Otto Funcke, had already, in 1890, given a warm and genuinely appreciative sketch of the countess's remarkable activity at Rugen. He had met her, then still a lady of honor to the Empress Augusta, in 1886 at a "Tea-Evening" in the Architectural Hall in Berlin, where he gave a lecture. After the lecture she went to him in deep emotion. She told him she had been thirteen years at Court and felt more dissatisfied every year. Through his words it had at last become clear to her how empty this life was, and that she must now do something to help her fellow men. Pastor Funcke, however, understood court ladies; he listened politely, but in his heart believed no more in the seriousness of this elegant, pretty, delicate-looking lady of thirty years than in other pining court ladies.

Four years later the good Funcke was staying in Sassnitz on the island of Rugen. While he sat at table with his family a Countess Schimmelmann sent in her card. When he went out to her,

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the former lady of honor stood before him, transformed; happy, contented, healthful and fresh. She invited him to come to see the work which the Lord had shown her in His vineyard. He journeyed to Gohren and visited her in the villa which she had built on the South Strand: a kitchen and three small rooms, the smallest her bedroom, no larger than a second-class cabin on a ship. Here she lives as guardian and mother of the Pomeranian fishers, at war with the entire population of the region, who will not tolerate her intruders because they receive free maintenance from the countess and no longer carry their earnings to the inns or farmers. They are very poor people, rough and wild; hardly ever on land from February to November except to buy provisions, which they are accustomed to do in Gohren and the Griefswalder Oie. As the Pomeranian coast and land fisheries are leased, they are forced to go far out on the high seas in poor boats, in which they sleep under the open sky and pass their lives for weeks at a time. The countess has built them a fisherman's home in Gohren, where they often gather by hundreds, and another

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upon the Griefswalder Oie. There food and coffee are served, but no whisky, beer or other intoxicating liquors. On the other hand the countess reads aloud to them, holds morning and evening devotions, allows them to play dominoes and other innocent games, and employs those adapted to it in cabinet-making during the idle winter months. With her she has three small boys, sick children of perished fishermen, whom she nursed to health, who run in and out of the villa, bare-footed and bare-headed, and to whom she fills a mother's place.

Funcke saw and heard all this with astonishment. His good Christian heart was deeply touched. He wrote a pretty article about it and called on Christian people to give financial support to the countess, who could herself only give her rents. A good deal followed, from the side of the government too, but the countess could not endure the interference of governmental rule. She was herself able to rule.

Now it will be asked—and I think this was the summed-up reason of the family for thinking her mentally deranged—how came this lady, still young, dis-

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tinguished by beauty, belonging to the highest and most fastidious sphere of life, to choose such a band of wild fishermen in their prime, sailing hither and thither among them in storm and tempest between Gohren, the Griefswalder Oie and the Pomeranian coasts, with spiritual and material food, and maintaining on land an almost dangerous strife with embittered innkeepers who were driven to bankruptcy through the countess's poaching upon their privileged territory? It would have been more reasonable, at least, if she had provided a summer sanitarium for chlorotic seamstresses in Gohren, or founded a kindergarten on the Pomeranian coasts.

If we inquired of the countess, she would probably answer: "My Jesus did not give me that to do." And there would be some psychological truth in it. It was an accident which gave the countess the direction for her course.

A trunk having been sent by mistake to Gohren, she went there instead of to another bathing place. One Sunday morning she saw a host of fishermen land and go from house to house, from hotel to hotel to buy food. The uninvited

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guests were everywhere turned away. This the countess could not suffer. Her cook was ordered to cook a large pot of potatoes and meat, and as that was not enough she sent besides her own store of supplies down to the beach. As she was from Holstein she could speak Low German; she talked with the fishermen, learned something of their way of life, and so it all began. Once begun, the hundred thousand needs of these numerous, bitterly poor classes of mankind took up more and more, and finally all, of her time.

In this the countess had not sacrificed herself. She had merely found the circle of activity which corresponded to her spirit and temperament. She ruled, sovereign, over her fishermen, and the unconcealed, admiring worship of these rough fellows was certainly to her a better pillow than a satin bed. It was no small achievement that she dared deny every drop of alcohol to these professional whisky drinkers; nor would it have been possible without that other stimulant which she gave them in place of it,—the singing and praying which she herself led. Dim, primeval memories may have

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been awakened in these people, living apart from all the influences of culture, by this priestess who created for them a world of fancy and gave it direction. She lived among them, divided all she had with them, wrote petitions to the government, ate with them, and hungered with them when provisions were scant,—and yet always stood above them, a strange, half-feared, half-superstitiously worshiped creature.

But however well she might get on with her fishermen, the Countess Adeline could not get on with the organized committee of assistance, nor with the government. The measures of the latter she found only serviceable to the dealers, the middle-men, and not the fishermen; while the pious Seminarists who were sent to aid her, proved as useless as the beer houses about to be erected were abhorrent. If her fishermen once began to drink again,—no matter what,—how was she to manage them?

In comparison with the countess's clear, positive account of her activity among the fishermen, Funcke's emotional description seems weak and cloying. In her marginal notes, she handles him in a

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slightly superior manner,—as a superfluous litterateur. The second half of the book—to which she promises a continuation, as she had just then no time to write more,—contains a very interesting account of her advent among the insurgent mob of the unemployed in Berlin during the winter of 1891-92. She seems in a measure to be the historian of those days when history was made,—but of which we know so little. She shuddered before this mob, beside which her fishermen were as white lambs and which was designated by the police as the worst of Berlin; but she drove into the midst, nevertheless, in spite of the fact that in front of her another carriage was overthrown and the occupants beaten back with fists when they tried to creep out. She and her two foster sons descended from their vehicle just as the same fate was prepared for them, and as she did not know what else to do, she began distributing money. When she had no more, the coachman offered her his. During the whole time she prayed inwardly and felt no trace of fear. “In those moments I understood how the martyrs could go fearlessly unto death.” About her, windows were



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beaten in, shops broken into and edibles carried off. She saw emaciated, anxious faces, and others of more than animal brutality surrounding her.

Then in her distress, her money being all gone, she began to speak. It must have been the greatest moment of her life. For while she talked and preached of Jesus to the unbelieving Berlin mob, she felt, as she herself says, that the woman who wholly devotes herself to a cause gains, through her very womanhood, a sublimity and power "which elevate her to fellowship with the angels."

She turned again to her old resource, furniture-making. A hall was cleared out for the unemployed workmen and she, herself, supported by Countess Zedlitz, the daughter of the Minister of Public Worship and Instruction, was among them from morning till night, drawing the patterns for cutting upon the hard wood till her fingers bled. When she had at last brought her Berlin proletarians so far that she dared sing a hymn to them, the landlord served notice upon her, because "he did not want any canting in his house." The police, to whom she appealed, could not help her.

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At last another, less intolerant man took pity upon them and she and her poor again had a roof over them where they could work for their livelihood.

One evening, after a day so spent, she went home to the "Christian Hospice," where she lodged, and heard some fashionable Christian ladies relate a shocking tale about the unemployed, which they had heard or read and which they held it their moral duty to hear or read; in the large room adjoining, a well-known minister preached on the theme—Why Jesus rode upon an ass's foal instead of upon an ass. "In the mood in which I had returned," she says, "I could not bear it any longer; I did not remain for evening prayers—I went up to my room and held them there with bitter tears."

### III

When the countess, having proven the possession of her mental powers through public lectures and her pamphlet, "My Missionary Life," had escaped the insane asylum and entered again into control of her inherited fortune, she confronted a new chapter in her life. Her meeting-

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house on the Griefswalder Oie had been broken up during her long absence, and her work among the Pomeranian fishermen destroyed. Nothing was heard of her wanting to take it up again, at first. She decided to go out on missionary work, with which she could combine the provisioning of the fishers of the West Coasts of Denmark. From the sale of her country house in Helleback, she procured the means of buying a yacht, which she named "The Dove." Through exchange, she got from the youngest prince of Denmark a large ship, suitable for long voyages and heavy lading, manned it with a Mecklenburg ship's captain and his wife, a steersman and six sailors, and went aboard with her two foster-sons. She loaded it with provisions and Bibles in several languages, and began sailing back and forth between England and the Danish Coasts.

In this part of the North Sea an extensive high-sea fishery is carried on, from the English coasts as well as the Danish. The fishermen sell their catch to steamship monopolies which run here and there, and buy from the same their necessary provisions, which naturally subjects the

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fishermen to outrageous fleeing. Here the countess brought material relief, as formerly to the Pomeranian fishers, distributed Bibles free, and held services on board her ship when it ran near the coasts, for all who would come.

Since then three years have passed. A Seaman's Home has been built at Gohren upon Rugen Island again. During the dock-laborer strike at Hamburg, the countess made the cause of their laborers her own and had often thousands of hearers at the meetings which she arranged.

In one year she had distributed 20,000 Bibles and other religious books in various languages, and had visited five hundred vessels. For those who work so strongly, comprehensively, and openly, many pockets are opened, and a great part of this extensive work could only have been possible through private munificence.

When we survey the singular life of this woman, now in the forties, two features stand out with special prominence. From the moment when it became individual, it was passed among men; it was

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directed towards regulating men; and it regulated them according to her personality. The first is Sectarian, the second Protestant.

In a life work of this kind, directed towards practical benefits depending upon organizing ability and organizing ideas, one must apply practical rather than ideal standards. Of such work we must not ask whether it is fine or good, but whether it is useful.

Of what use, then, is the work of the countess in the service of the Seaman's Mission?

Let us deal first with the more ideal side,—that of the feelings.

In America women appear as preachers and as such hold permanent appointments. In the Salvation Army, also, women appear in the pulpit. In all periods of disorganization, in the Reformation, the French Revolution, etc., women have always spoken publicly, whether for the Kingdom of God or for human rights. The pulpit and the speaker's chair are as dear to woman as the stage. In them equally she can enjoy the finest and least dangerous stimulant, in her influence over men. To speak as a woman to

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women arouses none of those trembling vibrations, gives none of that delicate satisfaction to vanity, wakens none of the sensations in which the woman—however unconfessedly—feels herself woman. The old church leaders forbade the public appearance of women as teachers or preachers, on the ground of modesty. Applied to the present, modesty would have to be far more subtly conceived than formerly. Let us go back to our question and ask: of what use is the preaching of women before men?

It occupies, entertains and moves them perhaps for the moment. But what sort of contact is there between the lady of honor to the Empress Augusta, and the rough, wild English seaman, who carries his limbs and life to market for his month's wage, and dwells under the constraint of nature and the force of conditions of which the well-bred lady can have, after all, only the most distant conception. She feels the masculine element in these men, in that bearing of chivalry and respect which never dies out in the healthy sons of danger and poverty;—and they feel at best grateful towards this fine lady who means so

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well towards them. But what comes of it all?

A round of weak tea, with ship's biscuit and a Bible sermon. Those who actually read in these seldom end by being the better or milder for it; they become sectarians, either as the founders of new sects or parts of those already existing.

And the material help of the countess?—her purveyance of provisions to the fishermen and her delicate care of them?

In one year she provisioned five hundred vessels once or oftener, and for how long? At the most for a couple of months. Who will provision them further? Is this provisioning regular? Can it be regular? And both of these granted,—though the contrary must be the case,—will a continuance be assured? Does not this very limited help stand or fall with the health, the financial means, and the will of the countess towards it? Who controls her? Who holds her to the execution of the once undertaken duty and organizes the work so that it shall go on after her death or withdrawal? “My Jesus!” she would say. “No one,” the incredulous would answer her.

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Poor Relief,—of which this is a part,—is the canker of our times. The State has everywhere proven its inability so to organize it that the poor are really helped. Private relief of the poor has been shown to be equally incapable of remedying poverty; that is, of helping those temporarily impoverished through illness or lack of work back to the stronghold of human society, by means of an ordered and assured livelihood; those who once accept support usually go to ruin; he who has once relied upon external aid cannot find his way again upon the narrow, hard, but even basis of his circumstances. The aid is uncertain, hence it does more harm than good.

The subjective aid, therefore, which proceeds from and depends upon one person, is of no importance,—when it is not worse,—in spite of all the sums thus expended and the sacrifices it may represent. Only self-less help, impersonal help which is nevertheless giving by living hands with warm pulses—therefore not the hands of the State—help from hands always open and warm, the failing and dying being instantly replaced by others, only such help could form a



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basis for the raising of those impoverished through natural causes or by over-reaching expropriation.

I could imagine a "Brotherhood of the Sea," springing out of and growing by pious bequests, which would carry through what the countess has begun, found Seaman's Homes, provision fishermen, assist their widows and orphans, and regulate the coast service of this strongest, bravest, and most endangered class of human beings; whose members could die and be replaced without disturbing the organization and practice by the breadth of a feather, and which would maintain in their might, in this age of struggle for existence, a class of men who are demoralized rather than helped by the occasional collections after great accidents. Such a service would rest upon personal self-denial of the old order, and presupposes renunciation of the egoistic life; a tendency which is again becoming strongly marked at the present time. And what would not a nature and disposition such as that of the Countess Schimmelfmann have been in a sisterhood of good works, under the firm control of a far-seeing organization! But it is still

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the fate of the most gifted to see themselves and their sincere purposes reduced to atoms.

### A FIGURINE

The central cause for that feminine disquiet to which we give the name of the Woman Movement is seldom recognized, still less spoken of, and least of all defined in its nature. It is this: woman now wants to possess and enjoy for herself that which she was formerly content to transmit, she, often quite unconsciously, and without intention, considers herself as an end, and desires—what all desire who attain to an end—to live herself out freely. He who looks deeper into life, and into a closer connection of things than this century offers, knows that this is an illusion. One cannot live oneself out fully because one is not that compact I which one imagines oneself to be, in accordance with the philosophy of egoism; because the free life of the ego really carried out would always end in the painful void of mental and physical sterility; and because the true feeling of delight in existence is the feeling of continuity, and so in a deeper sense, the merging of the person-

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ality in a great wave of life which carries it up, draws it into itself and submerges it.

The feverish impulse of self-assertion which is called living oneself in full, only comes when some one conception of the world and of life is approaching an end. Men feel that they will have no heirs, either in the flesh or in the spirit; they also feel that they are not inheritors, for between them and their progenitors there is a chasm,—the enmity of views, the contrast between old and young. When we study the mode of life as expressed in the literature of this century, we see that it is all built upon the contrast between old and young. From the period of Sturm and Drang onwards, this is the real theme of the poem, and youth appears always noble and age corrupt; youth is right; age is wrong; youth has intelligence, age stupidity; youth the future, age the past. Is it not astonishing how quickly, according to this view of life, youth becomes age?

It is a matter of five or six generations since the period of storm and stress just mentioned. Each of these generations was once young, accordingly noble and intelligent, with the right and the future

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on its side. Each of these generations in a few decades has become old, stupid, in the eyes of its heirs, in the wrong and of the past. And it is the same with these heirs when they have become fathers, and with their sons. The whole present literature is full of these contrasts. What is this contradiction but a breaking off—a continual breaking off of the curve of development which is always being pieced together again?

When, however, mankind is in a patched up curve of development, the individual will save and seize what he can; he must do so because no one, not even his father or his son, leaves him his natural property untouched; because every one lives by robbery of others, even the daughter from her mother and the mother from her daughter; because where continuity and mutual confidence and support were alone most natural and useful, the contrary—distrust and open enmity—have succeeded.

This circumstance alone, upon which art, literature, the manner of life, ideas of the world, family and State,—all are built, suffices to show plainly that one age has unfolded and is exhausted; for

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more warring contradictions there are none, unless the old and the new ego wage battle in the same being (*à la* Nietzsche) and make an end mutually.

In such fostering soil are now planted the gifted, intelligent, individualized woman-natures, so few or so many as they be.

For such a young woman, the first gloomy feeling changes into the conscious question: Am I not being robbed? Do they not take from me under the guise of love, tenderness and care, that which should make the basis of my life, if it is ever to have any? She feels that all those about her are takers, and give only that which they themselves do not want. And if she be not coarse, calculating and grasping,—which a great many women are,—anxiety is awakened in her. She begins to observe and weigh and think—think anxiously. And out of the suspicion of being robbed springs the desire to have. That is, if she be highly-bred; for the rudeness of the young ladies of the parvenu class in the large cities is frequently without limits. Certainly they enjoy the advantage that their need of having is wholly material and can there-

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fore be satisfied by more or less of indiscretion,—for which they are at no loss—and that in consequence they do in some measure extract the meaning of life in certain directions and live their lives completely.

It is otherwise with those in whom there is the pressure of an inner life, an awakening individuality, a more complex and many-sided demand for expression and for a free course. Such natures almost always lose their first ventures and have often no others. They cannot find their way. They go out courageously and seek a path, but sooner or later they come to a wall along which they grope but find no door. They go back and forth along the wall, they search and search,—no outlet. Then they become anxious, they have no time to lose. The days, weeks, years are going, the time is coming nearer when the woman wants to be sheltered, sheltered by a man's protection, sheltered by his position. They feel alone and cannot remain lonely. They crave an enclosure, and perhaps it lies just behind this wall—but they cannot pierce it. Surely this wall must have an end somewhere,—but then one must

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wander along beside it, and that takes so long; and whether one will find what one seeks at that end—who can know?

One thing we do know; the time thus lost is woman's youth, the most precious thing she possesses. And when a young woman has thought so far as this, an immeasurable weariness overtakes her. It creeps upon them all, those with strong, enduring powers and those with short-lived, early-withering freshness. Their blood slackens and grows pale, and there comes the failing of health, enervating rather than consuming, which in one becomes a fever of impatience and in another the pallor of weakness, and leads most of them into the first refuge which opens to them.

That a young girl should ever try to depict this condition, to give expression to this tendency, would be denied off-hand. That would be contrary to a young girl's nature! Not even Marie Bashkirtseff, the only revealer of a young girl's soul, has done this; on the contrary she struggled with all her might against making clear the connection between her depression and the inner physical and psychical life.

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And yet there was a young girl who attempted to do this very thing. She encountered many very hard attacks from press and public on account of it, and together they suppressed her. She disappeared and kept silence for about eight years, and when she again came before the public she was no longer a young girl, but the wife of a merchant. She no longer turned to account her own impressions and observations, but composed historical novels from books of memoirs; nor was she again attacked and suppressed, but praised and read. She no longer wrote under her pseudonym of "Stella Kleve," but under her proper married name, Mathilde Malling.

Stella Kleve could have given us much honest and valuable information about the psychological processes of the modern, nervous, refined and delicate young girl. She possessed by nature all the qualifications for delineating the psychology of feminine artfulness and the erotic side of young maidens of old aristocratic families; but neither the public nor private life of her Swedish home gave these unusual talents a chance to ripen and bear fruit. Such a disposi-



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tion can no more stand rough usage than one of those graceful draped figures of Sèvres porcelain, or a rare piece of precious Venetian glass, such as one sees now and then in museums, but which are not there to be handled or drunk out of.

She was one of those infrequent feminine creatures who have attained at eighteen years the height of culture, refinement and aspiration in their day. That she moreover matriculated as student of philosophy is of less importance. She came of old and rich family, was given a thoroughly French education in a Swiss pension on the Lake of Geneva. She entered life, a small, spoiled girl, stickling for good form, animated by and predisposed to the art of coquetry, for which she built up a whole structure of arguments; unusually qualified for comradeship and mental association with men; full at the same time of fear and curiosity towards the great unknown; afraid for her reputation, still more afraid for her maidenhood; often appearing perverse when she was only naïve; created for a luxurious existence, and prepared and educated for such even at

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a time when parental fortune was already beginning to vanish and soon left nothing more than a too quiet place of refuge in a lonely country house.

During this period appeared two little books by her, "Bertha Funcke" and "Alice Brandt"; books for psychological gourmands to whom incompleteness, half-concealment and unconscious betrayal are more interesting than finished form and ripe, displayed contents. They were in the highest degree the books of an inexperienced young girl, ignorant of the realities and standards of life; but in them were so many new and surprising possibilities of knowledge of the woman of the present, so many curious contradictions, so much fastidious caprice, so much real morbidity, so much unhealthy, superficial life, all held in the sure, clever grasp of a thin small hand trembling with sympathy. It is herself whom one sees in the perspective; the young girl who took herself and the externals of her mundane existence seriously, and another young woman—herself again, as she would have been after some years of deeper impressions, real experiences and favorable development; a bold yet shy

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revealer of the trembling vibrations and broken lines in that small group of women who are pure examples of culture and thorough creatures of luxury, and in whom we have seen the civilization of every period culminate and come to a crisis.

It is no longer motherhood and the exercise of the womanly mission, which is desired by these women; it is no longer on this account that men seek them. They offer an æsthetic pleasure like a work of art, and please the soul like music; they are charming and useless, like a shepherdess of Sèvres porcelain or a piece of artistic glass-work,—but for such the connoisseur gives tens of thousands. Why? Because they arouse certain delicate and subtle sensations which it is a pleasure to feel, a peculiar kind of elevation and satisfaction. Such a feminine creature, gifted besides with a subtle, critical, psychological predisposition to self-observation, a spy upon woman-nature in herself and others, of perfect cultivation and entire mental freedom, full of tact, timid and yet chattering confidentially with quiet pleasure,—such an one could have made

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some little disclosures of high and lasting value to the knowledge of woman as a flower of culture.

She did not make them. Upon her courageous though somewhat awkward attempt to do so in "Pyrrhus Conquests," she was simply trampled and thundered down by the apostles of morality, by woman's rights advocates with and without petticoats, and by the intelligent citizenship of her home; and no one came to her aid. Literature ought to be useful, they said, and no one could call such as this useful; it was injurious really. How, for instance, can any one describe how a young girl in her love reveries saw not the man of her desire, or at least not his face before her eyes, but his neck? A face is always something soulful, or at least could be so,—but a neck! That this neck was but a very simple picture of memory imprinted upon the eye by a striking light or some accident, and retained by the brain without the action of the will,—a psychological process especially frequent in women because of their susceptibility, and hence often the starting point of love,—could not be admitted into the

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highly advanced atmosphere of northern literature.

A peculiar feminine talent,—morbid and infirm in itself,—was broken. As the woman of thirty came before the public again, she had become retrospective. Her perceptive faculties, which life had not nourished nor unfolded, had sought stimulus and distraction in memoirs of a dazzling period, and grown into a visionary, girlish worship of the great,—and towards women very brutal,—Napoleon. Weakness seeks the protection of the strong, if only in fancy, and she fabricated in the midst of her descriptions of costumes and details of the time of the First Consul, the figure of an enthusiastic young girl who loved Napoleon and was wrecked by her love of him. This readable book was accepted with great satisfaction, and Mathilde Malling wrote on industriously, every year a new historical—quite historical—romance, based upon good authorities, about famous historical personages.

But there is no longer a Stella Kleve with the promise and realizing power of her girlhood.

Or does she still exist, quite hidden and

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overlain, like a mountain spring, in the corner of Mathilde Malling's soul? Nothing is more tenacious than these small, slender, pliant women with ineffaceable yearning written in the small countenances, on which the years leave no mark. In a little "Boot and Shoe Study, from the Musée de Cluny," the Stella Kleve of yore seemed to me to stand again before the wall along which so many women are groping, and to seek the door. The door was there, but she lacked the latch with which to open it. Some day, however, if the seeker came again, the door might perhaps stand wide.

### I

#### FINDER?

Among the women whose names have become famous, there are probably few who have devoted themselves to the leading ideas of our times, with such intensity and self-abnegation as Annie Besant. Her name is known all over the world; admiration and condemnation have been constantly disputing about her. She has captivated and moved masses as has no other woman, not even Louise Michel, with

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whom she has, in external position and in some sides of her temperament, many points in common. Both, in their entrance upon public life, had a common starting point,—the conviction which they hammered into their hearers with the greatest vehemence and which Louise Michel condensed into the short and pithy phrase: “Le bon Dieu n'existe pas!” Both were born speakers full of magnetism, speaking not only with the tongue, but with the whole being.

Louise Michel, meager, wasted, beggarly poor, with the face and body of a resuscitated corpse and the dry, complaining voice of endless disappointment, a fanatic, consumed from within, an eternal maiden of the pronounced type of the poor and ashamed old maid, was yet no woman in the attributes of woman. Annie Besant, a lady from the best social class, of an old, honored race, young at the time when Louise Michel, already broken down, returned from deportation, a wife and mother, pretty and attractive, with something the manner of an awakened child all her life long, a woman in everything and nothing but woman, and all the more a woman where she overpassed all the

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boundaries, external or internal, prescribed for women.

In the women of our day no moral characteristic is so marked as their cowardice. They do not dare to deviate. In this they follow a masculine example. Neither does man dare to deviate. No one dares any more to have an opinion of his own. The sole opinion is a collective one; there must first be a number, before it is spoken aloud. This is a clear indication of a general democratizing,—a process just in its beginning and conditional and based upon a reaction against international capital, which even now has at its disposal all military and legislative means of defense. No one can stand by himself any longer. It is even questioned whether anybody ever did; whether that was not one of the Protestant, free-thinking fictions, in which the well-known and already mentioned artifice of Munchausen was performed.

To be sure, our classic Lessing says: "No one must be compelled," but he also teaches very logically that there is only one possibility of escaping the compulsion—suicide. I have never been able to understand how that can be called an



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escape. An act of desperation is no escape. Self-destruction is no escape. The only thing which could be called a way of escape would be to give the ego more life, not to destroy it.

But that mode of escape is not for the individual ego in our day. An opinion contradictory to the general opinion never reaches the public. The printing and disseminating of unwelcome opinions is hedged in by thousands of censors, amongst whom the State Censor plays a very modest rôle. In the first place a disagreeable opinion finds no publisher; if the author has the means to print it at his own expense, the book finds no reviewers, the article no acceptance, or if both these obstacles are fortunately passed, the inconvenient person runs the risk of being undermined in his social position, starved out in his business life, or ruined by process of law. Our whole mental life at present bears this brand in every land; above all, of course, literature, because it has most directly the quality of magnetism. Does the public believe that the weak, submissive productions of the highly-praised popular writers are expressions of the general frame of

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mind, or even of the general enervation? Or that they are even an expression of the weak, desultory characters of those who produce them? Not at all; they are merely an expression of the race and will of the money-bags who wish to rule on undisturbed and like to enjoy a sweet perfume in their nostrils. Of course it goes without saying that the fullest expression of these armies is—the theater.

The first thing any one does who feels himself blessed with an idea is to seek connection with others, to found a group, a Society, or Union. That is very well for the bearer of the idea, but very bad for the idea. For this reason, most of the ideas of our day are as flat and commonplace as so much worn small coin; because from their very origin they are fingered, handled and popularized.

And thus we see everywhere, instead of the individual whose appearance would be so forceful and productive, the Society with its speakers, male and female. Such Society and Union speakers of the first rank were Annie Besant and the great agitator, Louise Michel. I have heard the latter speak and have seldom encountered anything so trivial; I have read some of

Annie Besant's speeches and hardly know anything more inflated, doctrinary and pathetic.

Pathos is a prevailing form of expression in this departing century. Things which if said in natural language would at once reveal their defects to people of healthy common sense, to say nothing of deeper minds, are rendered holy, exalted and sublime by pathos. Pathos for the general, sentimentality for the personal, affairs of life,—this is what the leading lights of art, literature and popular science have administered to us unanimously and for centuries. What wonder then that the individual is cowardly and uncertain and the public speaker pathetic and sentimental?

Pathetic and sentimental was Annie Besant also, but she never had the cowardice of grown people; she preserved always the impulsive—one might say the thoughtless—courage of a child whom the world has not yet touched, and also a child's credulity and need of faith.

That which distinguished her radically from Louise Michel, and might occasion much criticism and the rejection of my comparison of the two, is that she never

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preached murder and arson, insurrection and riot. That she might as easily have done so, with her imitative nature, as to proclaim unweariedly for thirteen years: "Le bon Dieu n'existe pas!" is beyond a psychological doubt. The men who became Annie Besant's leaders were not practical revolutionists, they were theoretic insurgents; not men of deeds but men of instructive and converting words,—Protestants and preachers. That which among the Romance races engenders outbreaks of wild action, leads in Germanic nations only to a wild exercise of speech. They are much more civilized.

If we follow Annie Besant's life we shall see that with her, in contrast to the other seekers described in this book, everything she took hold of succeeded. She was not only a seeker; she was also a finder. She had the gift of finding, wherever she sought. Many will deem this a merit and the mark of a healthy talent, and will consequently rank her above the other women described in mind and individuality. I should not be willing to do this. It is true all the others essentially failed; they found nothing, achieved nothing. But is not that

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rather a merit? Did they perhaps find nothing because there was nothing to find; achieve nothing because there was nothing to achieve? Was it not possibly precisely the more highly individualized spiritual life, the more original nature in them, which kept them from succeeding? They struggled and suffered as differentiated women, and if this or that in them became disjointed and perverse therefore, they were still perversions of their woman-nature, of their personal character which were revealed.

In Annie Besant we cannot discover the personal, individual woman nature; she is wholly a type. She is the typical woman of culture and cultured tendencies of the latter half of this century;—the woman lacking her own standards of weight and measure, lacking the feminine quality of intuitive, sharp, discriminating criticism, lacking the strong, imperative sympathies and antipathies of woman. She is the woman with the unconquerable passion for reading, capable of reading and appropriating everything, theology and social science, botany and algebra, atheism and theosophy, politics and devotional literature. She has

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studied everything, comprehended everything, talked and written about everything. She is the prototype of the intellectual woman with the "quick understanding" and "open"—ah, only too open—mind. The impersonality of the cultivated woman of the last decades is exhibited to us in her to a remarkable degree. She is a reflection of the masculine, consummate, scientific feeling towards the mental and social problems of that period. Everything knowable is known; everything comprehensible is comprehended; the human relations can be ordered and solved easily and clearly through political—parliamentary discussions, meetings, popular lectures and so on. There is much rhetorical "fire," little warmth and no depth whatever in this conception. There is also little modesty in it.

Annie Besant sought the truth all her life, found the truth, proclaimed it, found the still truer truth and proclaimed that, and was always equally hopeful.

At that time when the "Truth" was established in every tea-circle, and was as fine and strengthening to the palate as a glass of port wine with apple cake, and

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when the dogmatists and theorists, David Strauss and Kuno Fischer, plus Emerson and Hausrath, replaced the upright but antiquated Luther with his "Word" which they "must let stand," Annie Besant also relished her new-found truth as scrupulously as a wine-glass of "half and half" in the morning.

## II

Born in London on the first of October, 1847, Annie Besant, in her autobiography, first of all acquaints us with her horoscope, whose signs and numbers are, to my ignorance, incomprehensible. Proud of her Irish blood on the mother's side, and descended on the father's from a line of English country gentlemen, she united visibly the quick excitability of the Irish with the unapproachable willfulness and obstinacy of the Anglo-Saxon,—at present directed to external things.

The early-widowed mother, left in straitened circumstances, reared her only daughter in a sentimental fashion fatal to all reality, which was then characteristic of the mothers in all classes pretending to culture. A rich old

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maid undertook the intellectual and spiritual training of the little Annie, in strict Anglican sense, together with the two children of another clergyman. When the young girl was dismissed, after some educational tours in Germany and France, as prepared for life, she had no idea of the cost of a pair of gloves or of the way of basting a collar on a dress, to say nothing of the mysteries of the kitchen and house-keeping. On the other hand, she had dabbled in abstract theology, and sat in the trees declaiming Milton's "Paradise Lost," was pretty and captivating at balls, and rode and walked with young men with English freedom.

The unexpected consequence of all this was that the Reverend Frank Besant, for whom she had decorated the church during his mission sermons, paid her his addresses. Miss Annie was filled with consternation. "My sensitive pride, together with my strict views, found in this an intimation that I had flirted; I hung back, and instead of following my first impulse to say no, I took refuge in silence." The young clergyman begged her to preserve this sweet silence till he should have opportunity to speak with her



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mother; and now followed "the first unhappy days of my life, for I had a secret from my mother; a secret which I passionately longed to disclose to her, but dared not, for fear of doing something dishonorable." Then as her suitor again appeared and Miss Annie "out of pure weakness" still did not say no, her "reluctance to the thought of marriage faded" in the idea of "becoming a clergyman's wife and working always in the church and among the poor." "I longed for work," she continues, "I yearned to devote myself—as I had read women saints had done—to the service of the church and the poor, and to the battling against sin and misery."

But as Miss Annie, at the age of twenty, and after almost two years of engagement, became the wife of the Reverend Frank Besant, or to quote her own words—"sailed out of the safe harbor of her peaceful and happy girlhood upon the wide sea of life," the first thing she did upon this waving foundation was to seat herself—and write. She composed little tales and religious stories, got them accepted in family papers and felt "an intense delight at her first fee of thirty

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shillings." She "fell upon her knees and thanked God;" and a "wonderful feeling of independence" also came over her. "I did not yet know that everything a married woman earned belonged to her husband according to the law." She further informs us: "This odious law has lately been changed, and a married woman is now a person, not a chattel."

From the very beginning it was the unhappy marriage of a gifted woman. The Reverend Frank Besant "had high ideas of the authority of the husband. He thought of all the details of the household, was punctual, methodical, easy to anger and hard to conciliate." Mrs. Besant, on the other hand, was "accustomed to freedom, indifferent to domestic affairs, impulsive, very fiery, and proud as Lucifer." In addition there was another very difficult point. Mrs. Besant not only "had no idea of the management of a household and the economical use of money;" not only did she "accomplish as quickly as possible what there was to do, in order to get back to the beloved books again," but she moreover had no conception of the nature of the marriage bond, and was "given

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over defenseless to a fearful awakening." She reproaches her mother strongly, not because she had handed her over to the son-in-law after a two years' engagement, utterly ignorant and incapable of housewifely duties, a dowerless girl,—but because she had been sent out of the paradise of mother-love "perfectly innocent, without knowledge of good or bad."

"For," she continues, "many an unhappy marriage dates from that fearful blow which the pride and sensitive modesty of the young girl undergoes, and from her helpless bewilderment and fear." Annie Besant's allusions reveal a wholly physiological ground. She relates that her entire childhood and youth were passed in reading, and for that matter her whole life was spent in the unceasing exchange of what she read into spoken and written language. This had produced a constant concentration of blood in the young brain, or cerebral congestion, and—"Hot head, cold senses!"

In the years following came two children, both births accompanied with long illness. The second child was delicate, and during the first months in daily dan-

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ger of suffocating from the paroxysms of whooping-cough. As soon as the child, under her careful nursing, recovered, Mrs. Besant fell into a frenzy of religious doubt. The matrimonial discord also reached a crisis and Mr. Besant vainly brought an ecclesiastical friend into the house, to assist his wife. This man, to judge from one of his letters, possessed a deep, refined, and mature personality, warm hearted and full of understanding; but between this cultured mind, uniting the best theological dialectics with a mystic nature, and the much-read Mrs. Besant, who interpreted everything spiritual with a fearful literalness, there was too deep a division. The young wife and mother immersed herself completely in "theological inquiries," and these soon led to weeks of racking headaches, inability to sleep, inability to bear the light of day, and utter exhaustion.

The subjects of her spiritual misery and violent doubt were the following: 1, "the eternal punishments of hell;" 2, the meaning of the words, God's "Goodness" and "Love," since He had made the world with all its misery and sin; 3, the nature of Christ's Sacrificial Atone-

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ment, and the "Justice" of God in permitting a substituted suffering and a conciliation by proxy; 4, the meaning of "Inspiration," as applied to the Bible, and the perfection of the Creator in contrast to the mistakes and immorality of His works.

As I write down these vexatious theological questions which robbed Mrs. Besant of her sleep, her vigor of sight, and the consciousness of her housewifely and motherly duties, the question of her "intellectual power" arises. Mrs. Besant has all her life held herself as a woman highly gifted in powers of thought and judgment, basing upon this her qualification for her long, public life. She has always possessed the wholly feminine capacity of assimilating the most varied and incompatible mental food without disturbance or indigestion, and of giving it forth with a certain accuracy; her brain was like a photographic plate upon which the exposed picture is clearly and mechanically printed. These characteristics, the quick perception and exact repetition, are frequently praised by professors who examine feminine students, and many have declared that in eagerness for

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knowledge and ability to acquire it, women excel men. It is undeniable that in these characteristics they excel most men; it would be a pity if most men excelled them, for these characteristics rest upon the lesser power and capacity for original thought, independent selection, and deeper affinity to the appropriated idea; they depend upon a mechanical instead of an organic process.

It is difficult to believe that theological problems like the above could so turn a woman's head in 1873; in 1673 it were more comprehensible. For between the two centuries runs a line of development which from Calvinistic-Lutheran polemics has led to an historical and mythical conception of doctrinal theology; and for the sensitive woman it is never the question whether the head, but whether the heart, doubts the inherited faith. After months of speculative controversy between herself and several distinguished theologians, Mrs. Besant decided "to test once more, carefully, all the grounds for and against the divinity of Christ," with the result that she declared herself no longer a member of the church, and unable to partake of the Lord's Supper

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which her husband administered. As a brave and self-respecting woman she translated this into action and solemnly marched out of the church during the celebration of the next Communion, in the face of the uncomprehending congregation, who thought nothing but that the young wife was seized with a sudden illness.

These hard months of doubt had, however, brought her one comfort; she "became acquainted with a feeling of power and rapture,—but especially power—" which formed later one of the deepest joys of her life; for the first time she heard her own voice in oratory.

Mrs. Besant, who had married a minister "because no earthly monarch can bestow so high a title as is the patent of nobility from the hand of the King of Kings," . . . "a consecration which seems also to include his wife,"—Mrs. Besant was one day tempted "to know how one feels when one preaches." She went into the empty church, mounted the pulpit, and preached in the echoing, vacant room a sermon on the "Inspiration of the Bible." As she heard her voice resounding in rhythmic cadences through the nave,

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"only one thing was lacking,—the church full of upturned faces, filled with listening, heart-beating sympathy." "For now I knew," she continues, "that the gift of melodic expression would win hearers for every message I should bring."

Soon followed the catastrophe. She was told she must conform to "the external forms of the Church or leave the house."

"Against harshness I am as inflexible as steel," she tells us rhetorically, "but it was hard to remain firm when my dear mother, whom I loved as I loved nothing else on earth, threw herself on her knees before me and begged me to yield. . . . But—live a lie? Even for her, this ignominy was impossible to me; in this fearful crisis of blinding, deadly torture, my will clung fast to the Truth. Besides this the children were to be considered,—the two little ones who adored me."

When all was arranged, she had a small annual income and her little girl. Her mother died in the following months. Some difficulties arose because she wished to take the sacrament with her daughter, and the daughter would only take it with the conscientious proviso that she did not



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believe in it. Upon receiving this declaration several ministers refused under these circumstances to administer it; at last the Dean of Westminster, to whom she finally applied, consented.

She now studied more industriously than ever, wrote treatises on "The Nature and Existence of God," and the like, and associated with free preachers. These drew her attention to the Free-Thought Society, whose leading speaker was Mr. Bradlaugh, and from the first time of her hearing him they at once formed an alliance and led, inseparable and united, the battle for atheism and the extension of political rights,—at that time the struggle of the so-called Radicals in all countries.

### III

"If the Roman Catholic Church had won me,—which almost happened,—it would have sent me on missions full of danger and self-sacrifices and used me as a martyr; the Established Church turned me into an unbeliever and opponent," says Annie Besant of herself. And in another place: "So far as I can look back in my life it was ruled by this longing

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towards sacrifice for something greater than myself."

This something greater than herself, this leading power which subordinates the woman, Annie Besant found in Charles Bradlaugh. One cannot say that he was a master mind,—this member from Northampton, and editor of the atheistic and militant "National Reformer," who fought twelve years for his seat in the Lower House under vehement persecution and won at last, a victor but broken in health and ruined by lawsuits. But he was a man. An athlete in growth and energy, a bull-dog in tenacity and stubbornness, of an unexpansive, unrefined, sincere nature, he possessed in highest degree that physical quality which affects the masses, and women above all; he diffused about him the feeling of security. When one traverses a lonely wood in the dark, one feels safe with a true, strong and not too aged St. Bernard dog at his side; and one feels the same sense of comfort and reliance when with every glance at the man who is one's companion, the strength and capacity of his muscles and his bodily agility are perceived. But let this man possess the

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greatest physical beauty, the utmost delicacy of feeling, the rarest mental qualities, and lack that bear-like physical force,—one would rather have a farm-hand for a companion and, for the moment, would feel more warmly towards him. This undiverted instinct of women and of the masses serves only the strong, i. e., the protector; and in this instinctive feeling of safety, both are capable of the greatest self-sacrifice.

Mrs. Besant in her religious fervor felt in no way called to take upon herself the martyrdom of married life with an ordinary man like the Reverend Frank Besant. It is even a question if she would ever have fallen away from the Church whose servant he was, if she had not despised the Reverend Frank Besant. She had wished to espouse the Church in him,—perhaps because she felt at once the impossibility of subordinating herself to him as man, and instinctively spread about him the veil of mysticism; and as the intimate measuring of forces took place, which enters into every marriage, his personal inferiority was translated for her into an inferiority of the authority of the Church. Her desertion to atheism was only a

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change of front, not of nature. As free-thinker, she was only a fanatical, literal believer,—not a free mind. She entered into the profundities of free thought just as little as she had entered into the depths of the Christian symbolism; otherwise she would have found the underground passage which leads from the one to the other. This would have been hardly possible. I know no woman who has shown a capacity for pure knowledge, by which I do not mean to say that I have not known dozens in public and private life who affirm themselves possessors of this gift in high degree.

There now followed for Annie Besant thirteen years of "political life." Pretty, young, gifted with a melodious flow of speech, reveling like an actress in the personal enjoyment of public appearances, stimulated by the ecstatic feeling of a martyr, she was a wonderful instrument in the hands of an aspiring party leader, who trained her skilfully to the work of agitation, and could shift upon her a large part of his labors as agitator and editor, certain of a worshiping assent in everything, such as no masculine fel-

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low-worker could have given in equal degree.

Annie Besant was divorced from her husband, and Bradlaugh separated from his wife, who had become insane through the effect of intemperance. A marriage between them was, under English law, impossible; a free relation excluded by their public position. Mr. Bradlaugh, a vehement opponent of free love, subscribed to the strictest moral views. Materialistic atheism, the last link in the change of thought starting in the Reformation, was as a matter of course puritanic in England, just as it was "ethic" in Germany. Ethics had to wield the fallen rod of religion; atheism must prove its trustworthiness and its *raison d'être* in increased moral demands. The difficult situation of these two, inseparable yet dwelling separately, was at once increased and diminished by the fact that both were ardent Malthusians, proclaimers and defenders of the limitation of the number of children.

It is idle and concerns us not to examine more closely the intimacy of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. She herself tells us that from a weak, sickly woman,

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inclining to consumption, she developed in the course of thirteen years, through the constant exercise of speaking and the free unfolding of her mind, into a woman beaming with health. The two portraits in her autobiography tell us the same thing. The one shows her as a young, thin, clergyman's wife at the age of twenty-two, with feverish face, almost staring gaze, and a capricious smile on the lips. In the second, taken in her thirtieth year, we see a comfortable, rounded woman, elegantly dressed, the apparently short hair arranged in careful ringlets framing the smooth forehead, the pretty hands in graceful positions, an open pearl-edged Stuart collar as foil for the round-cheeked pretty countenance with the great too-wide-open gaze of a child and an actress; and about the small full mouth, from the nose downwards, that tell-tale expression which the smooth-shaven faces of actors and lecturers wear, caused by the constant straining of the mouth in order to be heard by great masses, a feature strange in a woman's face and producing an effect of boldness,—a boldness not feminine. And we find the pendant and prototype of this expres-

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sion of face in Mr. Bradlaugh's defiant and self-assured, smiling, people's tribune and declamatory countenance; a countenance such as this century of "political duties upon the speaker's platform" creates in all countries by dozens; the sophistic countenance of the ever-ready virtuoso of debate, the man trained for external effect in the art of mental boxing within a strictly limited range of vision.

And therefore it is of no consequence to us whether Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant associated together platonically or otherwise; for the sexual life only comes into consideration when it effects, at the same time with the physical satisfaction, a deliverance of the soul, a warming and expansion of the personalities. Where this is excluded or wholly secondary, the rest remains, for the psychological student, indifferent. And indifferent so far as the value of these two in question is concerned, it probably was.

Mrs. Besant now swam for years in the full stream of the agitator's life. The whole field of England was mown by atheistic-political lectures, of which she frequently gave three in a day. Often there was throwing of stones; oftener frenzied

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applause from rude laborers' hands. She was, moreover, an extremely skilful writer of effective pamphlets and declamatory-pathetic articles in the taste of the seventies and eighties, her pen flying no less swiftly than her tongue. She pushed her studies eagerly and always; Haeckel and Buchner, Stuart Mill and Spencer, Darwin, Lubbock, Buckle, Lecky and many others were devoured and parceled out. In Mr. Bradlaugh's political campaigns and battles for entrance into the Lower House of Parliament, she was always active, and in street processions and riots she often directed the masses unperturbed.

Meanwhile arose many legal processes, including that against the distribution of Malthusian literature, which led to the taking away of her child by her husband; a process during which Judge Jessel, a Jew, tried to render service to English orthodoxy by insolence to a woman; the only instance in all her numberless dealings with the law—in which she always conducted her own defense—wherein she complains of the ill-will of an English judge, apparently also the only instance of the English judge being of foreign race and origin.



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The year 1883 brought to Mr. Bradlaugh, the first atheist in an English parliament, complete victory at last and the public sympathy. Elected for the fourth time from Northampton, in the beginning of the next year he took uncontested his seat in the House of Commons which had been denied him for six years; and with this his contribution to the work of culture was at an end. The time for theoretical political Radicalism, which played everywhere in politics and intellectual life the same short and insufficient rôle, was at an end. Socialism came in. "Social reforms are more needed than mere political reforms," wrote Mrs. Besant in the same year; and even before Mr. Bradlaugh had quite won, she went over to the Socialists. Her leader and friend could neither imitate her nor forgive her. The moment of her desertion is characteristic. As he had once won her by his eloquence, so now, ten years later, he had lost her by it. Mr. Bradlaugh was in the trend of all his theories based upon the ground of the Law's authority, a half patron and whole enemy of Socialism. In a debate between Bradlaugh and Hyndham in St. James's Hall in Lon-

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don, in the spring of 1884, the insufficient insight and class limitation of the old advocate became suddenly transparent to her. Hyndham defeated Bradlaugh; he brought Mrs. Besant a "new and deeper knowledge," whereas the knowledge of her master had for some time appeared to her neither new nor deep nor inspiring.

Mrs. Besant's "battle-comradeship" with Mr. Bradlaugh had begun in ecstasy and ended in tedium.

And now see the woman again manifested, the woman with her natural impulses, curiosity, compassion and changeableness, which no external fetters can hold in check.

The only thing into which Mrs. Besant had gone with her whole heart was the sexual question of Malthusianism; for the agitation and dissemination of the knowledge of the way of preventing conjugal over-production, she unhesitatingly risked her reputation, social position and the possession of her dearly-loved little girl. In the last and deepest depths the woman grows really strenuous only for sexual and religious matters,—that is, for the satisfaction and goal of her life.

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The sexual life concerns the woman more nearly, more deeply, and more lastingly than the man. Therefore in the period of dissolution and over-reaching such as the last century forms, the sexual life in woman was suppressed and threatened at its roots. For the woman is only dangerous, fearful and irresistible in one point, from which it was therefore above all necessary to divert her,—in her motherhood, in her ill-treated, defrauded, sacrificed life, and in the ill-treated, defrauded and robbed life of her children. Why has she borne children,—and she will bear them,—if she must see them, her own best flesh and blood, the religious purpose of her life,—stunted, drained, degenerated? She cannot endure this; she must revolt against it, if she becomes conscious of herself, of her woman-nature in its wholeness. The delicate woman who battles for her young inflames man too to the utmost. Hence it was necessary to treat sexual life as brutish or trivial, pregnancy as a shame, and the illegitimate child as a disgrace.

Annie Besant had little of the woman in her, the little which the higher education and finer culture of this century

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leaves generally in plastic young girls. She had passed her youth in much reading and had given up her two children to purchase an imaginary freedom, in an age when every form of "mental freedom" is only another form of mental servitude. But in one point her instinct was not false; in her compassion for flesh and blood. She had seen in Malthusianism the only possibility for the working woman and the poor woman to maintain her motherhood and the care of her children; and we must here take into consideration the incredible fruitlessness of the English pauper marriages, and the bestial side of it, comprised in the degeneration of the proletarian. Certainly she could not know that what she recommended to the poor as an extremest means of help would be commended some years later by an orthodox paper to the families of the rich and thereupon industriously practiced in the circles of culture and wealth.

So long as she stood in the thick of the battle near Mr. Bradlaugh, she could neither look to the right nor left, neither feel nor think; but the struggle had hardly begun to abate when she felt a

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void,—the weariness of relaxed tension first of all. She tried at once to escape it by the way nearest at hand, according to the program of the Radicals,—the way of feminine scholarship. She also hoped to overcome the yearning for her little daughter who had been taken away from her, by leaving no moment in her life in which the feelings and emotions of woman and mother could break forth. Training can do everything,—it can even convert a woman into an organic machine. And training was and is the watchword of the prevailing spirit. She matriculated therefore in the London University, and found a great relief in plunging into algebra, geometry, physics and botany, though already overburdened by mental, if unproductive, work. She passed her examination, took her degree, and taught, together with Bradlaugh's daughter, Hypatia, in eight different branches in Dr. Aveling's Free-Thought Classes, from 1879 to 1888. The connection between emotional and mental life seems to have been broken; she was now, according to the new teaching, a human being, not merely a woman.

Then Socialism with its practical

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demands appeared, and straightway there arose in the woman the need of practical activity. From her childhood, she had felt the poverty of the despoiled country population, the need of the starving proletarian family, as if in her own bowels. But the spirit of the times went out upon the barren heath of political and philosophical theories and she followed on with the masses.

The self-satisfied Radicalism of Bradlaugh was showered with derision by the Socialists. She perceived that her admired leader no longer understood the times. She threw herself eagerly into practical reforms. Compulsory education had been introduced, but no one troubled himself about the compulsory nourishment of the children. She established mid-day meals for the school children, addressed the public for aid, and entered into coöperation with the great Socialist, William Morris, who died but a short time ago. She took up the cause of sewing-women under the "sweating system" in clothing branches when they "struck," compelled a favorable issue of the strike through her public speeches, instigated Mr. Bradlaugh to interpellate Parliament,

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assisted in founding the "Match-makers' Union," and the largest Women's Trade Union. Then came calls for help from all quarters; from the tin-can workers, the dock-workers, the chain-finishers, etc. English socialism, directed entirely towards the practical, tried everywhere to bring about instant reforms and immediate measures of relief. All were mere palliatives.

In the middle of the hard winter of 1887, when the unemployed wandered in quiet, starving, freezing masses, harassed by the police and ridden down by the militia,—there arose and grew in Mrs. Besant the feeling: "Something more than we possess is necessary to cure the social ills." Together with Mr. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, she pondered the thought of a "brotherhood in human service." "The teaching of the social duties, the handling of social justice, the building up of the common welfare,—these must belong to the Church of the future." And she also felt more and more strongly "that something must be sought in which the service of men was only the means."

Two years later she knew the word for

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which she sought,—“Whence to derive the inspiration which shall lead to a realization of a brotherhood of man? Our exertions to organize a host of unselfish workers were in vain. Much was done (from the economic side), but a real movement in which by self-sacrificing devotion people worked for love’s sake only, and longed to give, not to take,—this it was not.” And she confesses: “Since 1886 I have gradually come to perceive that my philosophy is insufficient; life and thought are not what I dreamed.”

And here—in the spring of 1889—she stood upon a wave which now, eight years later, seems to be all-pervasive and to comprehend the whole world of souls. The long reveries such as she had known in her youth in the warm spring evenings, returned, and her soul melted in yearning to find the unfindable. Some time later, Mr. Stead gave her for review the copy of the “Secret Doctrine,” by Madame Blavatsky, in two thick volumes. “I knew now that seeking was at an end and the Truth was found,” she says after reading the book.

She sought out Madame Blavatsky and went from her an enthusiastic disciple.



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It did not occur to her how similar this was to that other occasion when she became Bradlaugh's follower at the moment when his eye rested upon her and his voice spoke to her. The manner, also, in which the two won her was precisely similar and sprang from the same psychologically applied tactics. "Guard yourself from becoming my disciple," Bradlaugh had said to her in the first private interview. "I am so hated by English society that every one who tries to be my friend must sorely atone for it." And Madame Blavatsky's first words were: "Have you read the accusations which the Society for Psychical Research has brought against me?"—(a demonstration of mediumistic fraud)—and upon a negative reply: "Go home then and read them. If you come back to me then,—well and good!"

Mrs. Besant read the charges and went at once to apply for membership in the Theosophical Society.

The first thing which Madame Blavatsky required of her was to renounce the teaching of Malthusianism. Her grounds were nearly the same as those of the Catholic Church, although Buddhistically clothed.

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In fact the Buddhistic Theosophy stands nearest, perhaps, to the Catholic of all the sects. One cannot therefore tell when Mrs. Besant, now a woman of fifty and the head of the English Theosophical Society, will find finally and for the last time the Truth.

She now renounced all that she had hitherto taught, believed, proclaimed. Her Malthusian pamphlets, which had gained an enormous circulation, she now withdrew, prohibiting further editions. She withdrew from the editorship and management of the free-thinking papers, conducted with Mr. Bradlaugh. Hundreds of friends and followers who had stood firmly by her through hard years now fell away. She was once more an outcast. But this time it was not a valiant man and the swelling of a new wave of sexual life, even if only platonically,—that carried her away; it was an old, sick, and personally very poor woman, under suspicion of imposture, to whom she went over. And the struggle for existence was begun anew for her.

She made a complete Theosophical confession of faith, and they were no

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trifles,—these articles of faith; the Church of her youth from which she had fallen away, had not given her any harder nuts to crack than those whose kernels she now swallowed. Nor was she satisfied with the facultative, "I believe;" she confessed firmly and decidedly to the positive—"I know." And she had the happiness of seeing her children who had been torn away from her, come back to her as converted Theosophists and deserters from the Anglican Church.

Charles Bradlaugh died soon after her change of religion. Since her desertion to Socialism he had placed no more confidence in her judgment and he never advised with her again as formerly. After she turned Theosophist, he also doubted her reason. But there is no doubt that she was just as much or as little in her right mind when she recognized in atheism the proclaimed "Truth," as when she believed herself to have found that "Truth" in Theosophy.

. . . . .

Mrs. Besant bears in peculiar—one might say in concentrated—form the various distinctive traits of the woman of the present. The most striking

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feature, showing a new differentiation in woman, is the mental distress, an anxious seeking, enraptured finding, swift losing, seeking again, finding again and again losing.

This is a new feature.

It shows more plainly than any other that the man has lost, or has given out of his own hands the guidance of woman; that he no longer can lead, because he himself does not know the way. With what a joyous feeling of safety Mrs. Besant threw herself into the arms of the man and animal-tamer, Bradlaugh; and how easily she forsook him fifteen years later, without winking or blinking, for an old and ill woman!

How thoroughly possessed by mental stimulus is this same Annie Besant as young girl; a creature delighting in the realm of lettered fantasies; desirous of all ecstasies, a trembling worshiper of the mysticism of Catholicism, so permeated by art, in which to-day something still speaks to us of the primitive creative power of mankind. How purely tuned is this young soul for all rare melodies; how open to every germinating seed!

And what does she become?

A clergyman's wife, full of abhorrence and unspeakable disgust towards her husband, who committed no greater crime than that of being a too ordinary man; a revolter against sexuality, which instead of a feeling of pleasure aroused in her infinite depression; a woman who bore her children in difficult travail and recovered slowly from their births,—the consequence of unwilling conception.

And finally she concentrated her energies upon the one aim which is the last cry of the despairing woman—to be free! free from this oppression, for which the individual man is far less to blame than the whole state of society to which he belongs.

Most women ask themselves: "Whither?"—and this "Whither?" shuts the door before them. But Annie Besant went. She went, thanks to the gift of enthusiasm which formerly the woman transmitted entire to the children of her womb, but which the woman must now take for herself in order to live.

And she found the man towards whom everything in her yearned for surrender. But he had no time for her.

He trained her to speak, to write, to

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agitate. He waved her as a banner. He counseled with her in difficult political and philosophical questions. He, the tired giant, propped himself with her as with a willow wand in his hand. But for the wholly womanly quality in her, for the woman-child that blinked with awakened eyes, he had no glance, no expansiveness, no comprehension. He was an overburdened, overworked man. He had no time.

So she sought the "Truth," sought for it with feverish determination of the unsatisfied nature, and proclaimed it with the fanaticism of the self-deafening soul. And beside the athlete of atheism she stands as the priestess of the discovered Truth.

But she cannot transform herself, cannot wholly make herself what the man of this time requires of the woman,—to exist for him, utterly for him, his mental companion, his friend, the reflection of his ego; withal, somewhat his beloved.

She is still woman—

And then she meets a woman, tired and starved, another woman like herself; who fascinates her with the motherly gaze, who is superior to her in mind and

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will, who lulls her with her woman's voice and strokes her soothingly with her aged, soft hands; who looks at her and understands, as only a woman can understand a woman; a greater judge of life and more of a sinner than she, who hopes, wishes and seeks for nothing more, rehearsing her ancient stories which are so soothing, like the prayers before sleeping when she was a little girl.

The whole, dry, wearing tension of reason relaxes; she collapses and believes, partly from exhaustion, partly because of the mystic in woman, who believes anything rather than be shut within her finite Ego—the self which has become sterile.

Many have gone this road, but few so ostentatiously and conclusively. It is the road of disappointment which many are now constantly traveling in all lands, zones and climes. At the same time they feel with a sort of comfortable resignation that they really stand nearer to each other—woman to woman, among themselves—and understand one another better than man and woman understand one another.

As I was one day walking in Munich, two ordinary old women stood on the pavement and talked eagerly. "The

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gossips!" I said to myself, half unconsciously. But just as I was passing them, the words fell upon my ear in tones of honest conviction and deepest gratitude: "After all, the best thing in the world is a good woman friend!" I looked up into such a sincerely moved countenance that I both laughed and felt moved in sympathy. Women are naturally allied. Suppose this feeling should spread now throughout all classes?



## PART THREE



## VIII—THE MAN QUESTION

### I

I start from the premises that the woman never, nowhere and in nothing, can make or mark a starting point; that all that she does, performs or suggests, represents always but a deviation, a connection with or continuation of something already produced, existing, done; that in mental spheres she is subject to this law as well as in the physical; and whether or no she succeeds in subjecting the physical side, the mental will not be altered.

She has only one quality peculiar to herself; that everything which she receives, pretty or ugly, strong or weak, bright or dull, good or bad, can sprout and grow,—influenced quite essentially by the substance of herself which she gives,—but not the best endowed woman can change a false thought into a true one, or a bad seed into good fruit.

One such false thought of insufficient

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masculine brains,—of weak men, needing support, overburdened with study, in a crumbling, brutalized, undermined society,—is the idea of the emancipation of woman.

As such it is wholly consistent; the premises granted, it is a logical conclusion. The only question is whether the premises are real, stable and unalterable. Real? — yes. Stable? — questionable. Unchangeable?—no, for the change is already here.

The emancipation of woman presupposes one thing clearly; it presupposes that the man says to the woman—"I can no longer strengthen you, no longer support you, no longer defend you. I shall not prop, support, nor defend you any longer. It is burdensome to me,—and it is unworthy of you. We will become equals. You shall have equal rights, to fight with me over the bones. I don't lay claim to them for myself alone, but I don't divide willingly with you as in the dark times of the Middle Ages. Let us wrestle for the bones; that is our human right. They belong to him who can get them and keep them,—thanks to the law of free competition; and this law is holy.

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Nothing is more sacred than the right to overreach, which custom has made legal. But besides, the demands of the heart and other human parts, not to be more clearly designated on account of their doubtful moral authorization, remain to be allowed for. Let us form an alliance, based upon personal freedom, for mutual support. We have an example in the societies with limited securities. We form this union with a view to mutual advantage. To each belongs what he earns, and what he brings with him. And we increase our working ability, as was said, in that we lean upon one another. I am really very much in need of this, for the course of the world has damnably debilitated me."

Thereupon answers the independent young woman: "Lean on one another? I fancy myself serving as a prop to you! I shall stand much more steadily alone. I am not conscious of any needs of a doubtful morality. I know nothing of any needs other than to eat, drink, sleep and work. Of these the last is the strongest in me. I have an inhuman craving to work. My gifts and talents have already rusted for too many centuries. My ego

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has been misused by the man to make other egos out of me. Therefore I have nothing. I shall be myself and do what I wish to do;—Fichte taught that, as you perhaps remember. I must first become a human being before I can be a woman;—I owe this knowledge to Stuart Mill, Bebel and Ibsen. For the present you are a human being and I am a human being; ergo, we are equally great. Please make industriously, dear fellow-man, as many books as you can write;—that is the only thing truly worthy of a human creature. I read everything you write and repeat it all after you by rote. You shall not lack this kind of support from me."

And then the two fellow-creatures go wandering on, arm in arm, into the morning red of the new century, "thinking and composing."

But he who happens to meet them in their naked beauty, will feel as one does before certain pictures by modern painters. He asks doubtfully: "Which is the man and which is the woman? Or are they both men? Or are they both women? Or is neither of them a man,—and neither a woman?" The external marks are wanting, the internal also.

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They are both fellow-creatures, "new creatures."

When the woman forgets her nature and breaks into the domains of man, it is a sign that the man has forgotten his nature, and has begun to retreat from his domains. Such times are a serious menace to civilization, and the races in which they appear go through a severe crisis,—the crisis between barbarism and degeneracy. If this crisis becomes latent, as is the case in England and the United States,—whence these teachings come,—we have the barbarian-decadent, and his counterpart, the aggressive masculine woman, the cerebrale. In other words, hybrids right and left.

And between these two "human types" as guard of honor, we are passing now.

I shall not linger over the physical and mental premises for these appearances, the actual existing sexual fluctuations; they require a chapter to themselves, out of place in this book; nor shall I here describe the classes of society or the combinations in which these variations most frequently occur; only this, their true, fostering soil seems to be the large cities, the sedentary occupations, the par-

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asitic callings, the confined life in various forms among the rich and poor, and the crossing of heterogeneous races.

I have noticed that in people of mixed blood, such for example as the Germans and Jews, this variation of sex,—the effeminate man, with cackling voice, the fleshy body with a mountain of fat in the hips, the thick white face with weak beard, the somewhat coquettish and theatrical manner, the sweet smile, the modest glance; and the opposite masculine characteristics in the woman,—the reckless pushing into prominence, the shrill, confident speech, the pronounced business sense, the self-satisfied smile,—these double sexual indications are strikingly frequent in such crosses.

This is most easily to be observed in literature and the theater. Do not many of the fashionable writers, young and old, smile at us from their portraits in the book-store windows with painfully sweet womanish lips? Is not all that they write spongy and loose and calculated to please the speculative sense of the publisher and theater magnates? Are not natural lines and homogeneous development rare appearances in the world of printer's ink



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and painter's canvas? And is not the so-called "manner" exaggerated till it affects us like angular feminine thinness?

What is most characteristic in the "writings" of the last decade? It is the obliteration of the distinguishing sexual stamp of the man and woman. The woman has now in all literature something of the masculine. She has a certain practical, coarse ability for keeping on top of life. Usually she appears as a sort of guardian of the man; in most cases she knows what she wants. These, considered from the standpoint of woman-nature, are signs of degeneration; they are acquired characteristics, acquired through struggle and at the expense of more valuable feminine qualities, acquired through adaptation to a period of dissolution.

In men, meanwhile, the typical feature is weakness; weakness of will, weakened powers of resistance, inordinate self-esteem, self-surrender, something broken, back-boneless, trifling or dull, arising not merely from bodily weakness but essentially from that pitiful condition of mind which we describe as "not knowing in from out."

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Such conditions are the outcome of overmuch scribbling and composition during that decade of highest enlightenment and civic liberalism in which everything swam in beatitude, declamation, higher moral views, still higher education, and highest consciousness of energy. From the A B C to the seat of Ministry the ways were all clear, pointed out and paved, and the "Good, True and Beautiful" the self-evident Pole-Star of the higher classes. Through a systematic cultivation of self-esteem, and an openly sanctioned and protected, though faulty, line of development, two generations were made incapable of understanding or even seeing the actual, in its effects, its essence and limitations. Instinct, the most precious inheritance of the human animal, was systematically discredited, repressed, eradicated. Of what use was instinct to the sons of "cultured families," the children of large cities? In place of direct contact, they set the children to reading and "systematic education." Only the "self-made" man, cast out into life early, escaped the "systematic education" or mis-education which is still in force to-day.

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Hence we find even where there is no mixed blood, the same mollusk-like flaccidity in appearance, and the unmodified brutality,—a brutality already decaying, even as the mollusk-characteristic hardly appeared ere it began to mold.

From a press and literature so nourished, the mental food of the people is drawn, from the effect of which no one who reads can entirely escape; it penetrates him as the miasma and bacilli in the air do, invisibly and irresistibly.

And if we stand before the schoolhouses as they empty and look at the growing youth, we see already in the boys the spongy, fleshy bodies, the puffy, pale faces with loose cheeks, the dull gaze of overburdened childhood, unhealthy development and obstructed sex,—the blessings of the large city, the general education and compulsory school attendance from the sixth year.

Thus the boy becomes the man. And how does the man appear?

One need only stand where the trains pour out their Sunday loads into the country, to note two groups of men.

There are the tall, lank, narrow-shouldered ones with dull eyes and weak legs

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which manifest an estrangement between the knees, walking or standing. And there are the bulky, goggling, round-backed men with their womanish legs and insolent rudeness. These are the two city types, as this century of freedom, humanity and free competition has made them.

Barbarian, decadent, and barbar-decadent; but in their clothes there is no difference. For they all dress in the fashion of the day; the long and the short, the thick and the thin; in round sacks without back seams or shoulder-marking, which fall away loosely from the neck; and below, the sack divides into two other sacks which hang down loose and flapping. And thus they wander about, round-shouldered, without shoulders, without calves, without signs of age or sex,—living illustrations of the revenge of Israel upon the vanquished Germans, beaten in the money-market and in the fashions.

But past them go wheeling, brave and homely in tricot stockings and knee-trousers, with masculine high collars and cravats, their sweethearts and sisters,—also their mothers.

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And the sporting woman and business man form a free union with or without accident insurance.

To render the progress of civilization in this century quite intelligible, let us place beside these a leaf from Holbein or Durer, hence also from a period of revolution, the beginning of the very period of scribbling and declaiming revolution of which we to-day are the last offshoots.

How do they look, these arborealists and worthies, who were also merchants and townspeople?

There they stand, lean and slender and firmly built, every line sharp, masculine and direct, the close-fitting hose reaching to the hips, on the upper part of the body the equally close-fitting doublet; nothing of their build or the peculiarity of their movements escapes the eye, and their sharp, bony, shrewd faces, with the easy, indifferent glance, say: "We are wide-awake even when we are not looking, for the Real in which we have tossed about from our childhood has no secrets and no surprises for us."

And beside these men we see the women of their time, firm and straight, stately and assured, carrying under wide

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projecting stomacher the work of the man; in long, folding, trailing skirts and puffed sleeves, their persons are as concealed as the man's is exposed to view.

Now, it is precisely the opposite. The man conceals his body; the woman unveils hers. It is another form of the struggle for existence.

If the woman is to bear men—strong and handsome men in carriage and form—she must have strong and handsome men, of noble mien and carriage. before her eyes. Now, when the moneybag makes the fashion, she has nothing but round backs and crooked legs before her eyes. When ten years more have gone by, it will be interesting to see how large a proportion of our German posterity talk Jewish jargon with the arms and legs.

### II

Among the distinctive characteristics of this century of sanitary arrangements, bacilli - breeding and giant strides of medical science, is to be classed—Illness. Not very long ago the collective chorus of enlightened writers proclaimed that the time was now come when science and

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the physician should take the place of the priest and religion. The noble bards hereby abdicated for their part, for only a few decades earlier, in the first half of the century, they had proclaimed themselves and their writings as the guiding light of the people in place of priests and religion. The poets are gone,—dust to dust; the physicians disarm; illness remains.

Yes, being sick is the fashion, is a duty and a credit. As soon as he can afford it,—and of course the cultivated and upper classes, the purse-proud, the capitalists and higher bureaucracy can afford it,—the person of culture invariably suffers from something or other which is not at all appetizing; liver, kidneys, bladder, stomach, bowels, lungs, heart, eyes, ears, throat, or nose,—these are the organs whose diseases one confesses to with a certain importance. There are other organs over whose sufferings we preserve a profound silence.

Illness is an achievement of culture, like the methods of cure; one “believes” in his famous physician and “expects” from him one of his famous “scientific triumphs.” One journeys to baths, visits

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sanitariums, drinks at springs, follows a diet, subjects himself to treatment, carries his internal organic disorder traveling by land and sea, loves with his maladies and takes it for granted the dear progeny also should have a physician in attendance from the cradle up, and come into the world in fact with an outfit of scrofula, anæmia, etc., etc., to which they may add in time the other ailments of civilized mankind.

What is more significant in the age of vast progress for the human mind, of stock-jobbing and of international, homeless capital—the achievements of the “liberal era”—what is more significant than that the higher classes regard ill-health as fine, and the health of the farmer, like the farmer himself, as coarse,—something to be looked down upon and destroyed? The farmer must disappear,—he has already done so in a measure,—in order that the “industrial state” may sow the whole earth with chimneys and change all civilized peoples into sickly ones. No one is healthy who loses the earth from under his feet, or whom the earth—the rejuvenator and nourisher of organic life,—no longer



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nourishes. Illness—one might well say the worship of illness—appears also among the farming and country families where the decrease in land values, exhaustion from over-exertion in production, and hopelessness of the future have penetrated.

To the healthy person illness is a shame; he feels it akin to a refusal, a corruption of the organic forces of his body. He is ashamed of his unhealthy humors. Only that illness which he has acquired in an honest struggle with life, in work, resistance and resentment of wrong, he bears and overcomes as a warrior his wounds. The sound man admits illness as nothing else than a wound which life deals him and which will heal with the first good weather, the first rising of the new sap. The parasites of society, the unproductive strata and the uprooted, consider illness an integral element of being.

And how does the woman look upon illness?

At once we must ask: Which woman?

The idle, unoccupied, dissatisfied woman enjoys illness. It is a distraction, a kind of occupation. It relieves her from duties, it relieves her from self-reproaches, it gives

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her an opportunity to torture others,—husband, children, servants, all those towards whom she feels the rancor of the wronged and deceived. The woman of the “upper classes,” born in great cities, is to a very large proportion an unmerciful parasite, especially upon her husband, upon whom she seeks to revenge herself for the fact that she looks down on him, by a life-long, unintermitted small warfare. Many men have ruined themselves for such women and for this kind of love. A woman knows very well when she drives the man to dishonest or criminal action with her desires and needs; she reads the silent language of his soul with great ease, in his determined face, his brooding immobility and his accidental, uncontrolled movements. But she will not see it; she ignores it; she knows nothing of it before herself, before him or his intimates; as if in a secret intoxication of moral insanity she urges over and over the one demand with which she gave herself to him: “You are my provider, you are my support,—well then! Provide for me, support me!”

Still another type of women, that which struggles for bare life without happiness,

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fortune or prospects, the stunted daughters of the impoverished middle-classes, willingly seek in illness a refuge from the Unspeakable which pierces them,—an oblivion. In illness they pamper themselves,—who have been so little pampered; and all those women in whose life the masculine sun does not shine, who go on by the side of pining husbands and weakly, oppressed sons,—they all wish: “Ah, if I could only be really ill so as to see nothing, forget everything!”

The working woman has no time to be sick. She beats down the illness or drags through it. Every day has its exchange of work and wages. There can be no intermission, else the machine will throw her out.

The woman is not generally sick in the same way as the man; she has not such a great number of organic diseases with their unchangeable courses; hers is not such a slowly and irresistibly decomposing organism as his. She grows ill from emotional causes and recovers from emotional reasons. Stagnation is for her portentous; but not so fatal as is the stagnation combined with multitudinous duties and pleasures, of the man.

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There is one thing—as I said before—which the woman seeks in the man, every woman from every man, in every class of society, in every age, from every standpoint;—that is protection. Upon this is based the whole relation of the woman to the man.

The strongest and healthiest woman feels herself at times weak, by reason of her constitution as woman. She is subject to pangs of anxiety which remain always vague and which she would therefore the next moment deny, but which nevertheless influence her. She seeks in the man first of all the undivided feeling of physical security which the warm proximity of the stronger body gives to the weaker, the body with more in its power gives to the body with less. She seeks from the man exactly that which the child seeks from its mother,—protection, translated into warmth. That is the reason why even to-day the strong man ranks higher for the woman than the handsome man, and muscles higher than mental charms.

However, the muscular man is not always the strongest man. A woman wants protection for her mind and soul no

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less than for her body. The man who is man by virtue of his mental and physical qualities and not only by virtue of his muscles, far surpasses the athlete in the eyes of the refined and intellectual woman, because he can give her a more perfect form of protection than the latter. And for many women there is a peculiar kind of fascination in the man who, physically delicate or not making use of his physical strength, guides and holds them by virtue of his inward manliness. Herein lies the great influence of the priest over the woman. He is to her both man and priest and equally strong in both aspects; the mediator between her and the Infinite; whom she fears, yet by whom she is attracted.

But when we see to-day a tendency in the woman to isolate herself from the man, to protect herself against him, we should not ask: "What kind of women are these?" but rather: "What kind of men are they that occasion this?"

If we examine more closely into the many forms of expression which this tendency away from and against the man has found in literature, of which there is much in the petitions of women, the

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temperance movement, the efforts to affect the making of laws, etc., we come to the surprising result that this whole movement rises from fear of the man without self-control,—the man as fleecer. However distorted in manifestation, however comical in effect—especially in the form of activity in England and America—its origin in the lands of the largest capitalistic enterprise, where the struggle for existence is the most brutal and extortion most heartless, is highly significant. Women band together to protect themselves against the man in his chase for money, who in his rage for speculation considers all that comes within his view only as booty; from the drunken wretch who does not know what he is about to the delegates of the land who concoct laws for their own benefit and the protection of a minority.

It is from the man as brute that the woman tries to protect herself; let him be never so good-natured a brute in his quiet moments, and though the individual woman may be able to turn her individual brute with her little finger, there still remains a fear,—the sympathetic quiver of the woman who feels the endangering,

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suffering and mishandling of all, as if they were her own flesh and blood.

The view of life in this century—to return to what was said before—has made of the man a race-runner for advantage, a finite ego with short, finite aims, a fool of egoism without an outlet or a prospect. Therefore he has lost sovereignty over the woman. For the woman cannot bear finiteness. She will not accept the idea that the chain of life, of which she is but a link, should be cut off behind and before her. The man who can offer her nothing more than that values her lightly, and his offering, himself included, tastes insipid.

The man-question of our day is not the question of how one shall find a husband; it is the question of finding men of productive will, subjecting themselves to a loftier, more enduring purpose, and ruling over the women not as single creatures with individual claims but as links in a chain of life.





## IX—ECONOMIC AND PSYCHIC DISTRESS

The many honest people who think they hear in the Woman-Movement the memento mori of a race, and the gnawing of the death-worm, are not so far wrong. As it manifests itself outwardly it is a sign of decay and corruption, and where it has produced conditions—or more accurately has grown out of conditions—as in the lauded lands of woman's emancipation, the decline of a race is plainly shown.

What are the conditions of the highly-civilized lands in which the woman's movement is felt,—where it makes progress? America is to be considered as a land of culture only in a very restricted sense; and when certain ladies point proudly to the power of women in Wyoming or New Zealand they bring very poor support to their cause. The social order in new countries can never be held up to older civilized lands for imitation; else a clean sweep must be made in these States of their inhabitants and their

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culture, together with their traditions and early history. The woman-movement has everywhere a wholly economic basis; in all its phases it deals with the necessity of the woman's providing for herself,—what women call “being independent.” But of what nature are the economic conditions which bring forward so strongly this necessity?

In the lands where the inhabitants follow farming or cattle-raising as occupations, or in districts where these pursuits are most exclusively engaged in, we find no woman-movement or a diminishing one. But I have seen it appear at once, in Sweden and Denmark for instance, with the falling of the price of grain as these countries found for their grain products no market on account of the enormous exports from Hungary, Russia and America, and were forced into other production, sugar beets, eggs, slaughtered beeves, hogs, etc.; therefore as tension of business and the expenses were increased in unheard-of—let us simply say in extortionate—degree and these countries were forced to become industrial countries. In this period of transition we remark the following parallel appear-

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ances: rapid falling of cottagers and small farmers into the rank of proletarians, decrease of marriages in all classes, increasing alcoholism side by side with a temperance war against this evil by both masculine and feminine agitators, growing emancipation of woman in the upper classes and increasing prostitution in the lower classes. The large cities are the real centers of this movement, equally advancing among high and low, and pre-eminently so the largest cities, and more exactly defined still, the large Protestant cities. We find a real woman-movement almost exclusively in the Protestant industrial countries of both hemispheres.

The women who have achieved independence remain single in the majority of cases, or in marriage are childless. In London there are whole quarters which are inhabited for the most part by self-supporting spinsters who have their own clubs, kitchens and dwellings. We see here in the better classes thousands of women deprived of their natural life-satisfaction for the sake of their living; and parallel with this circumstance, in the lower classes thousands of equally childless prostitutes. A similar increase

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in the number of unmarried men in these great world centers has also preëminently the avoidance of offspring in view. But the renunciation of offspring is what deals human nature the hardest blow and most deeply desolates the soul; wherever it appears in force it brings with it a retrogression of culture, a coarsening of the ideals of life. It is moreover only occasioned by urgent motives, by economic distress, or by degeneration,—and distress is in most cases the cause of degeneration.

Prostitution and emancipation go progressively side by side; they are two stalks from the same root,—woman's despair over her allotted portion in life. But woman does not, of her own initiative, despair; the despair of man must have preceded hers. And the despair of man has been expressed for decades in the great centers of trade by the increasing growth of alcoholism and the frightful increase of suicides.

Woman, who has by nature a sharp eye for details and things near at hand but almost none for great proportions, has till now allowed herself simply to be led by the formula of human rights, which in this century has only resulted in free

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competition and wage-slavery under the rule of capital. And when she has attained what she sought,—her full personal independence, right to vote, unlimited power of self-disposal,—she will have achieved merely one thing; she will have run the last and most comprehensive errand in the service of vast international capital, which there was left to run.

We have to-day two strictly divided classes of woman, those with invested capital and those without it. The last named are the proletarian class, and I have but very rarely seen the well-to-do woman, the woman of the upper classes, exhibit towards these others a womanly understanding, humane pity, active and effective compassion. People will at once hold up to me the great charitable tendency of this age. Charity,—yes! For this the so-called lower classes are grateful so long as there is still a bit of honor in them. But the blessed aid of Charity's dole here and there can only be bestowed upon absolute poverty. Active sympathy is not charity; it is something quite different, much warmer, more personal, and the knowledge and exercise of it does not belong to "the achievements of our

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century." But it is a part of the woman-question, and one of the weightiest parts.

The woman-question as it is now conceived is a class question. It first begins where the means for development are at hand. It demands equal rights for the sexes; that means, penetration of the woman into the labor-market of the man in mercantile, technical and learned callings. Dispassionately considered, that signifies depreciation of wages, hence further impoverishing of the middle class. And thus the woman-movement in its present form can only do service for King Capital.

We have seen that in the development of industry masculine labor has been in great part displaced by woman and child labor in order to effect a reduction of wages; we now stand upon the verge of a displacement of men by women workers in the so-called higher occupations also,—occupations where there existed already a monstrous over-supply of masculine laborers. As soon as the woman enters these occupations, she will at once effect there also a fall in wages; for in the first place she always offers herself more cheaply in order merely to get there;

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secondly, she then consents to greater deductions than the man; and thirdly, she lives—as soon as she is no longer supported by the man—incredibly cheaply. Parsimonious King Capital is therefore willing to open to her all callings directly or indirectly dependent upon it, where till now it let itself be drained by the wage-demands of the man. Hence the woman, if she would open new fields of occupation for herself, must work for man's destruction. When man is no longer the supporter of woman, she must become his oppressor. The two parallel appearances, prostitution and emancipation, must, whether their representatives wish it or not, undermine the man physically, materially and mentally; the man, the procreator, the maintainer.

Many people object to this woman-movement; most people look askance at it. Many find the demands of the women foolish and destructive, and every sensible person smiles at the formula of the equal position of the sexes in their physical and psychical consequences.

And yet we cannot deceive ourselves, a woman-movement exists; a much deeper, stronger, more general movement than

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appears publicly or dares to formulate its wishes. In comparison with this woman-movement, the public one is only a ripple and a transient degeneracy. This other woman-movement is as yet a dull, instinctive revolt against the whole spirit of this century, its teachings and achievements. It is shown above all in the manner of the relations between women and men in the higher classes.

A general depression has entered into the association of the sexes, and on both sides there is an effort to keep it superficial. Nowhere in the love-relations can one perceive a spark of enthusiasm in the woman's being. People in reality only seek to get along tolerably with one another. But a woman's love is *élan*, is devotion; where she does not feel both, she does not love, she only makes a business exchange.

I have often been struck by the embarrassed, piqued manner of young men in company with young girls. Why are they so piqued and embarrassed? Do they perhaps vaguely feel that they are despised?

Men have no idea—and take great pains not to imagine—how quickly



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women, and even the youngest girls, despise. Where they no longer admire they have already begun to despise. There is no thought in it, it is an impulsive reflex emotion. But how many women and girls nowadays admire men,—the men whom they personally know? Whom, then, do they know? The patient, working animal, the bow-legged, weak toady, the time-is-money man; for this unfeeling money-maker is nowadays the flower of manhood.

The successful speculator wins the admiration of our time, whether he be an American petroleum-king, a Berlin stock-gambler, or an international grain speculator. They are spoken of in tones of awe. Success is honored in them, and they are regarded as examples. And for more than half a century the generations of growing masculine youth have emulated these examples. "Make haste to be rich!" that is the suggestion which is hammered into the young man through all the impressions of life and his whole course of development and study. It has produced the strangest forms of degeneration and a fearful lowering of culture, has made the moneyed man, the sports-

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man and the keen barbarian the true representatives of man.

One step lower, the cry is "Money here!" and one takes it where he can find it. Often he succeeds, often not; then he shuts his eyes and sends a bullet through the brain, or evaporates—to America. Those who are not so fortunately placed as to have a chance of seizing, admire humbly and with a bitter feeling of inferiority the various forms of purse-pride in their time and land.

What can the woman, the bearer of the future generations, do among such fathers, brothers, lovers and husbands?

Much has been written, in this century of exact inquiry, concerning the psychoses. Learned psychologists have thoroughly studied the great psychosis of the Middle Ages. First of all there was the great religious psychosis of the Crusades,—that period to which curiously enough we owe the most lasting monuments of civilization of the Christian Era, those lyrics in stone, the Gothic cathedrals. There were the psychoses of the Flagellants, the St. Vitus dancers, the wandering spirit of the masses; in the time of the Reformation, those of the

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iconoclasts and Anabaptists. Could we not perhaps call the Reformation as a whole the psychosis of rebellion of the North against the South?

Then followed the fearful persecutions for witchcraft, their orthodox sophistry, the extenuated and in a measure sneaking psychosis of Pietism, which continues till the present; and parallel, though in contrast, the psychosis of enlightenment with its scientific materialism and atheism, in the midst of which we are to-day. There is only one essential difference between those surmounted psychoses of the Middle Ages and the still unsurmountable ones of to-day. The former were warm, from redundancy of feeling penetrated by sensual warmth; those of the present are cold,—psychoses of mental over-tension and palsied feeling. Why is it that no one of our "leading minds" has as yet busied himself with the psychosis which is now exactly at its height, the practical materialism which, in league with vast international capital, endeavors to repeat the Roman Empire,—the dominion of a very small, fluctuating minority over the endless masses of wage-earning slaves? The speculating mania of

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our age is also a psychosis—a cold psychosis.

The first thing which such a period tries to repress in woman is her emotional qualities—precisely those to which an earlier time opened doors and gates; in religion, in art, in the numberless institutions for charitable work where sympathy—the human feeling of universal oneness—not only found expression but could pour forth fruitfully and helpfully.

Not only have all these institutions vanished within a few centuries, but emotional life in general is dammed up, restrained, isolated entirely within the family. Ecstasy, one of the greatest levers of civilization and pillars of development, became suspected and was placed under strict and unfavorable supervision. In course of time, it fell into discredit as bad taste, and was branded as “mental darkness”; later ensued the consequence that every well-bred woman must hide and repress her feelings—even her sympathy—and hence must and did shut her eyes to a number of shocking things practiced in public and private life. By the middle of this century of civic virtue things had gone so far that every glance

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or deed of the woman beyond the family circle bore witness to an "unhealthy fancy" and was held up to her as a proof of "unwomanliness."

The "true" woman, the national and liberal woman, the German "woman had eyes only for the Good, the True, the Beautiful," against everything "ugly," "dirty" or "common," and whatever else belonged to the lowest rounds; blinders were fastened on by school, home and custom, over which she dared not squint at the risk of losing her "purity" as "maid, wife or mother."

When, however, the woman with her emotional qualities "knows not in from out," she does as she did in the period of the Roman Empire; she goes to the bad; or she emancipates herself and degenerates. For she always follows her masculine example.

Out of the material distress which grew with the advancing years of the century, sprang the woman-question; as to this we are agreed, and the rest is clear. Or do not the roots go still farther back? Do they not reach down into the secret region of mental distress about which no one concerns himself all this time? For

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man does not live by bread alone. Might we all agree perhaps that this ancient saying contains a certain truth?

This mental distress was caused by the constantly narrowed limits to the woman's instinct of expansion; because the range in which she could be active became ever smaller; because she was more one-sidedly thrown back upon herself, upon herself as sex, and because she was in her sexuality more and more restricted, chilled, rendered superfluous.

After the Reformation, woman had one right to existence only—as wife and mother, under the guardianship of the husband; aside from this she led only an accessory existence as fine or ordinary courtesan. Finally as old maid she became a superfluous member of the family, who had in modesty to efface herself. Aside from her available or unavailable sexuality she had no cause for existence; she was altogether superfluous.

As the family could not longer support this steadily increasing number of superfluous members, and endeavored to push them off, the woman-question arose.

Confused, unprepared, injudicious, a host of blinded creatures sprang out of

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the darkness; the mass of superfluous beings threw themselves upon the labor-market and tried to seize on what lay nearest. Equally confused, unprepared and injudicious were most of the men who met them there or led them thither. The inevitableness of competition was at once demonstrated; a struggle which threatens to make earth more of a hell than ever for mankind; for the struggle between man and woman for the mouthful of bread is the most unnatural of all struggles.

And what the woman does in the departments which she has conquered in the struggle for existence,—is it any more than unproductive work, work in which her innermost woman nature, her need of expansion, her enthusiasm, her emotions, lie fallow; work in which her woman-substance fades, in which she is unsexed?

Already in the teacher's vocation there is for many women no adequate contentment; what sort of satisfaction for her woman nature, of exaltation of her womanly instincts shall a woman find then in office work, as telephone or telegraph operator, as typewriter, in railway

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offices, at the postoffice window or as college auditor?

And everywhere in these departments they are interlopers and parasites, taking the bread away from the mouth of the founder of the family. Are there no positions where the woman can perform productive labor to the satisfaction of her woman-nature, and yet remain out of competition with man?

If courage had not so thoroughly broken connection with the past, had not at most points broken the continuity of evolution, this way would already have been found and entered upon, as found it must be and trodden.



## X—WOMAN'S PRODUCTIVE WORK

### I

The air is gray, warm and damp, filled with the thousand-fold twittering of bird voices. Water drops and purls and runs, from the roof, under the snow, between the stones. A pale young blue parts as if with invisible hands the white cloud-drifts, and climbs higher and higher in the heavens. The snow sinks away as if drunk in from beneath, and tiny blue, yellow and white heads peep out like little eyes, waiting for the sun. Everything thaws and melts and stretches itself timidly in the March mildness. Is spring really coming? A tiny gnat dances in the air as if drunken, a spider sits on the wall and stretches carefully first one leg and then another. The unchanging animals begin their invariable life anew and confide in the spring although they do not yet know that it is coming.

And I feel already the thawing in thousands of human souls, and in my own. I know that now thousands of women will pour out the spring-rain of

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tears which have no reason and no purpose; tears at sight of which sensible people unwillingly ask—"Why do you weep?" and the questioned one answers, shy and abashed—"I don't know!" tears which are still the best of all tears, for they well forth wholly pure out of a yearning soul, they thaw out all hardness and float away all obstructions, till the ground of the soul is quite full of moist warmth and fruitful readiness and opens quietly, tranquil and consecrated to the seed and sun,—waiting for the seed and the sun. . . .

In every spring the souls of millions of women open thus at the first gurgling of brooks and drinking of the earth, from the twelve year old girl to the fifty year old matron, from the streaming tears of early youth which gush like a mountain spring, to the single drops which fall hard and burning—or else strangely cold, from the lashes of the tear-dimmed eyes of the old woman. Who does not understand these tears, does not understand woman. And in those who no longer shed these tears, the woman is dead.

These causeless tears are the most real tears of the woman—tears of yearning after her perfection, tears of unfulfilled

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destiny. The unhappy weep them and the happy weep them, for between the fortune of the one and the misfortune of the other there is little difference. But why she weeps, no one of them can say; she only knows—"I feel so."

I will attempt to say it, to comprehend something of that which lies on my heart again, as it falls upon the souls of thousands of other women, soft and heavy and oppressive.

Our time has educated us to isolate ourselves, and taught us to call this "individualization." We speak of individual happiness and individual life, and we persuade ourselves that when we have found our individual happiness and have planned our individual life we have something upon which we can live and die. But at the corner there stands a beggar-woman with a baby on her arm; she stands there although begging is forbidden and the next policeman will send her away. We see only the back of the little child and the little body as it is outlined through the old shawl; it lies with its head upon the woman's shoulder and sleeps, nestled close as only little children and little animals can nestle, and as we

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see it, unexpectedly it goes through us from head to foot like a burning pain, and against our will it is as if it were the child of our own womb that sleeps there helpless and exposed to all evil; and if we were going now straight into the arms of the beloved man, in the leisure hour of happiness, it is still as if the sun were extinguished and everything cold and black around us; even he, the beloved, seems to us distant and strange. For our mother-feeling is stronger than all other instincts and our mother-feeling is all-embracing.

The spirit of our time isolates the woman with her own children, if she has any, and if she has none, it isolates her by herself. Personal happiness!

Whoever has lived life, first without personal happiness and then in the personal happiness, knows that for the woman who has remained woman there is no limitation of personal happiness; for the woman in her womanly activity will everywhere go beyond her personal happiness and outside of it—into the all-motherly. To fill up this fountain of warmth, has been for several hundreds of years the line of development of

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advanced thought. And therefore we stand where we are.

From decade to decade, from century to century, we have been exclusively referred to man, till the end is that we have been referred also to man's labor market,—that we have been forced into his duties and rights. Now is it time that we demand back again our whole woman-being, not only our womanhood as regards man, not only our womanhood as mother, but all that we are by virtue of and through our sex; and that we reject everything which by virtue of, and through our sex, we are not.

The woman is not merely woman through her sexual function and in it; she is also woman aside from and without exercise of her sexual function, by virtue of her organs as woman which determine her soul and feeling. Let us be wholly women, in everything pertaining to woman, in our view of life, in our life-activity, and in our occupation, whether we become the man's or not. We will not go begging at his table nor crowd him from it; we desire a table of our own, for us and our children,—if not the

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children of our body, then the children of our all-embracing motherly love.

We are not here simply for his pleasure,—the pleasure which he always imagines, and which we let him imagine gives us so much more pleasure than it really does. For us the pleasure is a rare quiver, perhaps only wholly felt, and then with awe, in the moment of impregnation,—and hundreds of times not felt, where many are so obliging as to feign it to the man because he wishes it to be so and so rejoices over it. And we are also pleased because he is pleased. For the woman sexual enjoyment is a bliss only felt at long intervals, after yearning and denial, not in daily habitude. And when the woman burns in constant longing, which the man takes as a capacity for a high degree of sexual enjoyment,—then it is either an alternation of men which stimulates her or there are shameful grounds of local disorder, for which the man, always vain in this central point and easy to dupe, makes a fool of himself.

Yet another thing; all, who are not ugly, are trained and educated by the mother, by the servants, the books given

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them, the family papers, to be pleasing and at the same time suggestively coy towards the man. For he has been for several centuries the woman's only possibility in life, aside from which there was nothing, and in regard to which all caviling and choosing was dangerous. "One must take whatever offers."

This ran through all classes, till the economic stress had reached such a point that the man began to consider how he could quickly free himself from the burden of women at least. The earlier forms for this—the practical, well-carried out organizations—were destroyed, forgotten, or where this was not the case, discredited as expressions of mental darkness. No one had the courage to revert to them or even give them earnest consideration. The line of development should go forwards, not backwards. Therefore, forward march!

Let us note this: the man cut the woman from her former numerous possibilities of occupation, sustenance, cultivation, and concentrated her entirely upon himself. The man as private individual became the woman's content, occupation and maintenance,—a perfectly natural

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fruit of advanced individualization; the man as private individual felt himself with the lapse of time too much a beast of burden,—a further fruit of individualization; and as he could not straightway assign his superfluous sisters, cousins, aunts, sisters-in-law and distant feminine relations to the poor-house, he directed them for general maintenance to the public.

Our teachers of political economy, and social philosophers of English and Social-Democratic origin express it thus: the man ought no longer to tyrannize over the woman and hinder the unfolding of her mental abilities. He must unselfishly assist her in all her struggles for independence and self-maintenance. Then he has her off his neck.

The next thing is to find for the woman paid work, which is reckoned in money value after the manner of masculine labor, in place of the unpaid, i. e., woman's household work, which has hitherto been paid only with natural maintenance. And the shaken off parasites now run about in all directions seeking men's work, true to the suggestion given them by man. For if the idea had originated with woman—



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the woman of womanly feeling and consciousness—she could never have fallen upon this way; she would have sought to create woman's work, performable by women, and in woman's peculiar departments. If this whole movement had really arisen out of the womanly necessity for inner and outer unfolding, it would involuntarily and spontaneously have set up the productive labor of woman as the first postulate, and just as involuntarily and spontaneously have defined wherein the productive work of woman consists, how it is executed, and what conditions are necessary for its fruitful consummation. Nothing of this sort has taken place.

### II

In what does woman's productive labor consist?

As I write this question I am surprised that it has not been raised before, either by the women or the men; and for the following reasons:

Firstly: In order to meet the woman's need of work, we must decide clearly for which branches she is especially fitted.

Secondly: In order to avoid the intrusion of women into the departments more

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natural to man and better filled by him, we must fix the distinguishing qualities of masculine and feminine work, and discard those branches in which woman's service is inferior.

Thirdly: We must know in what departments the woman is superior to the man, and hence reserve this work for her, so far as possible.

Fourthly: It is a question of a certain quality of performance, not merely of work alone, but of productive work; i. e., no longer the service of an individual for a certain return, no longer a mere wage relation, but such that by its very constitution a surplus arises out of it which contributes to the public weal and is indispensable for its preservation.

Fifthly: Has there anywhere been any conception of a work for women as productive? It seems to me there is no such conception, since it is desired to open to women all branches in free competition, which therefore excludes protection in her own especial branches, if there be any, and turns them over to neglect and destruction.

In fact these special spheres have been given over to neglect in a narrow sense

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throughout this century, in a broader sense for centuries. How do people suppose that this lack of consideration for woman's peculiar gifts and talents must react upon women? Do they suppose woman can thus unfold upon all sides, can become conscious of herself, or disclose and bring into action her whole nature? Do they suppose that woman really is just as the man of to-day knows her, or pretends to know her?—or as she knows or feigns to know herself? Do they imagine she has so completely attained possession of herself, that she can now expand also into distant spheres common to both sexes? Whoever believes, can continue as heretofore, but there are always some who will not so believe.

On the contrary, we are just at a point where—in comparison with other periods—men know increasingly less of women, and women know but little of themselves. Why? Because the opportunities for knowledge are undermined. For a long time woman has been considered simply as material for entertainment and transplantation. The woman fared so well thus that she became remarkably inade-

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quate in her special departments; from which the conclusion is drawn that she is fitted in a high degree for other departments. Into the preparatory mill then, and emerge as doctors, lawyers, people's representatives, agitators and various other high officers.

We do not in the least thereby discover wherein the woman's productive labor, which can be performed by her only, consists.

The best work which the woman can create, and in which her productivity is complete, undiminished and enduring,—is the child. Of what avail is it to me that I am able to take the highest honors, have the slenderest waist, write the best books, in which even something like a new thought appears, if I have sickly children? In the children, the mother's value is revealed. If the children are not quite what they should be, and there are no reasons for thinking the father to blame,—then there is something wrong with the mother.

What is it that is wrong with the mother in most cases? It is a failure of health previous to the mother-calling. This is a manifestation belonging pecu-

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liarly to the second half of this century. It made its appearance side by side with the later marriages, not only for the man but also for the young girl in all countries. Towards the South, the divergence from the earlier custom is less great; towards the North the difference increases to as much as ten years later than was the custom formerly. It is no longer considered either a fine or moral thing to marry a "child." She must not become a mother too early; she must be "mature" enough to be capable of "self-determination." But before she has attained this maturity the "child" has begun to lose vigor.

There was a time when the twentieth year was anxiously anticipated by the young girl: "Twenty years old," said mamma's best friend, "and no husband yet!" Now even the best family friends have become more tolerant. "She will soon be thirty," they say, "she has not much more time to lose." In this current conception there is more physiology and psychology than one thinks. The twenties are in marked degree years of lassitude; we can all observe that in one another. For the young women who

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are not broken or withered in these, the curve goes upward again with the thirtieth year. The reasons for this are unwillingly touched upon, because a not unessential part of our present moral and social structure rests upon their concealment. But they are not unknown to almost every wide-awake woman, and the instinctive consciousness of them promotes not a little the decline in health.

There must still be many families which can remember a grandmother or great grandmother, married at fifteen, who was active, even in her old age, as a cheerful, benign and experienced woman. When these characteristics are spoken of now among her grandchildren, it is in tones implying "notwithstanding," with a ring of pity; those times were still very crude, you know! If the great-grandmother could speak, it would perhaps be also in tones of pity,—these new times are so strange.

In the young girl of healthy vitality, the period between fifteen and seventeen is really her blossoming time. Every one perceives the fragrance which hangs about her whole young being, making the insignificant charming, the homely

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engaging, and first revealing beauty. The bloom of the skin, the sparkle of the eyes, the slender, graceful suppleness of the body,—everything is blooming health and elasticity. People imagine this is something purely physical, which changes so quickly on that very account; but how if it changes so swiftly because it is more psychical than physical,—an almost instant unfolding of all the expansive capacities for complete womanly feeling, in which there is as yet no reflective thought?

Why does the blood come and go so quickly in her cheeks? Because she undergoes great bodily agitation? Or because presentiments, ideas which are knowledge, connections of sympathy not yet become thoughts, glide through the soul of the young girl at the slightest outward provocation? Why does she feel this loud, tumultuous heart-beating at the approach or greeting of a man, which becomes still louder because she fears it may be heard? Why does she so often drop her eyes and grow confused? Why are her slender hands so warm and moist that the crochet-needle rusts in them? Why does she always turn her handkerchief between them as if to dry them,

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when a man offers his hand in greeting? Why does she often grow pale under a glance, so pale and so suddenly that one thinks her about to faint? Are these only physical appearances, without her knowledge?—or does she know only too well and blush or pale with double violence because she fears it can be read in her face? Many believe the former, and the mothers always say excusingly—"She is still so innocent, she is still quite childish." I believe that "she" is perhaps never again in her life so little childish as then. The years when people no longer think her childish are quite frequently a great step backwards towards childishness.

In this short time of blossoming—and perhaps only then in fullness—everything in the young girl is in readiness. There is readiness of soul and mind,—a capacity for intuitive understanding, for unrestrained devotion, and unbroken instinct. Nothing is perverse in her, and she is still so pliant that nothing tears wounds in her. Her interest and inclination, anxiously hidden and kept secret so far as she is able, turn chiefly toward elderly men. Why? Because they have more



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time to give her, more mental and spiritual attention than the young man, wholly occupied with himself and making demands for himself. A marriage, however, between such a young girl and an elderly man would bring with it horror so spontaneous and convulsive that in a lifetime perhaps the memory would not vanish from the nerves. For it was not the senses alone which spoke so loudly; it was the yearning, softening woman-soul. The young girl is bound to the young man by likeness of physical development, which excludes observation and terror and does not allow the natural to become a thing of reflection; but in capacity the young man is himself still wanting, and thus upon the physical union follows so often in youthful marriages a void,—and out of that void, grief and strife,—in case no positive calls of duty create for them both intervals of rest from one another.

Out of the emptiness of remaining unnoticed,—and the inner life of the young girl remains in those years almost without exception unnoticed, by many from ignorance, and by the few from shyness,—out of this emptiness of useless

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blossoming arises a depression, for the quality of which it is hard to find the right name. It is an indifference, a limpness. The young woman is no longer quick and nimble as formerly; she feels a slackness in her muscles, something like sand under the skin, which makes her arms and legs heavy, and something soft in the back, like a cushion instead of a backbone.

She prefers to sit still and her eyes become dull and dreamy—languishing we call it, but it is not that, it is disappointment; so far as I understand it, it is the very deepest disappointment of her whole life, penetrating body and soul, for it springs from the feeling of a dissolving unity. The woman never again possesses herself so completely; she is never again so susceptible mentally, so awake, so capable, never again so pliant bodily, so strong and ready. The years which now follow, the actual years of marriage, find her often physically indisposed and mentally depressed. She likes to engross herself with externals and takes them seriously, whether she discusses her toilet or the subject of her studies, in case she interests herself in the latter. The spontaneous,

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individual, lightning-swift comprehension, the inward possession are gone. She has no longer the energy for this, nor the interest. Men say then—"She is not of a sensuous nature." Or, "She is so gentle." Alas, she is only indifferent; she "takes things as they come."

In this condition, she becomes a mother and transmits to her children that which she has. "She is so pleasant," say the many. "There is really something dead in her," say the few. It is a condition without instinct; rectitude of judgment always, but the expression of the personal unity is lost. Being and acting from within outwards, the spontaneous sense of the true is broken. In its place are wilfulness, assertions, judgments read or heard, whether upon a matter of fashion or a way of life; something excitable, strained, unnerved grows ever more visible. Under the pressure of this condition the children come into existence and grow up. These are their first impressions, the physical reflex action of the mother's condition upon the forming foetus, upon the sense, eye and feeling of the little creature in its development.

The being of the child in the first ten

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years is only a connected reflex action. It is of very little moment what we teach it, what we require of it, what we imprint upon its mind; what we are is everything. It will mold itself after us,—from within outwards. It will never more be free from it, even though it later considers and reacts consciously.

Her children are the woman's productive work. In them becomes manifest what the innermost substance of the mother was, what her natural capital was worth. The productive labor of the woman does not consist in educating her children, as people in this century have believed and upon which many women have exerted all their energies. Education is external work. But what is not in them cannot be brought out of them; at most only a simulation can be attained. The woman's productive work is not above all a thing wherein much can be achieved by will, intention, effort, design or training,—the productive work of the woman is her inner nature, her inborn character, her warm soul, her good heart, her healthy blood, her unbroken strength, her untiring energy, directness, buoyancy and freshness.

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When the mother does not rise like the sun over her child, warming so that every tiny limb stretches with pleasure, gladdening with her glance and smile like a peep into the bright morning, waking and alluring forth all that is good and strong and happy and healthy,—then she may have very many excellent qualities and her child may also have many excellent qualities, but qualified for life he will never quite be. He has been led astray and will lead astray in great things or small; he will be insatiable and insufficient, rough or dull, or if he is so constituted that he can overcome all that was unpleasant and diseased in his childhood, a thorn always remains in his side, and always a certain unskill in him. He could not suck himself full of healthy blood and warming sun.

But the times are now such that women not only become mothers later than before and when they are more worn out, but that the best endowed, strongest, most vigorous, best equipped young women, both mentally and spiritually, devote themselves to becoming self-supporting in the most varying ways. The conditions compel this in all classes,

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from the minister's daughter to the farm-maid. With the maid, motherhood does not so readily feel the pressure; with the others it is fairly excluded. As earners and learners they pass the years which, as I have shown, are the richest years. They develop and cultivate, meanwhile, certain sides in themselves,—the understanding, perhaps also faculties of thought, and what capital they possess,—spirit, temperament, judgment, talents, they make of use for themselves. They barter their own capital and consume it at the same time. If then later, in their "maturity," they come to have children, how many slumbering gifts, how much untouched capital can they give them? It is already used, bartered, coined.

### III

The real demand of our time is that woman should enter into possession of herself. What we women have all at once and bitterly felt is that we are cut off. We feel as if there were one united determination to hem us in all around. First in the parental home, where our real self is held back and something non-essential developed; then as women, we

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feel it in the attitude of men, even the best of them. If we seek our own path we find indeed a calling, an activity, a distinction, but here also all is hindrance, hindrance, hindrance, always the same; we are driven back into ourselves.

What is it within us which yearns so to expand and is not comprehended in its present forms, which is only quieted and relieved in one way; i. e., more and more with every birth and every child? Is it a surplus which we ourselves cannot use or exhaust in living, which is only given us to transmit as a heritage to new generations? Is it the surplus which is indispensable to patient carrying of the fruit and to willing and happy fostering of the tiny, new, living creature?

Thus we always come back, however we may stray, to the two questions: Must the women crowd the labor-market of the man? Shall the best endowed woman-material be diverted from the productive labor of woman,—or only render a minimized service therein?

Is not the evolution of humanity dependent in a great degree upon making use of such material in the service of the race and species? And do we not

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see in the European youth for some decades back, a deterioration and dullness which may be connected with the fact that not the best constituted and richest natures are sought out or stand ready for disposal as mothers, but often the most inferior instead?

But what is to be done with those who are left over; who, for one reason or another, are not drawn into the true productive work of woman? Is it supposable that under favorable economic and social conditions an equilibrium will be reached so that there will be practically no superfluous ones?

I believe not.

The number of women who never become wives will certainly remain very large in all ages, as has always been the case for hundreds and thousands of years. I think it is more likely to increase than to diminish. This depends upon both man and woman. It also depends upon the fact that every moderation of feeling and refining of temperament bring with them a decrease in the outburst of sexual life, especially in the great mass of mankind. The highly gifted and they who stand nearest to nature have far more



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urgent need of the sexual satisfaction and suffer far deeper injury without it than the average character. To many men marriage will always be forbidden by the circumstances and external activity of their lives, without making them celibates in consequence. We cannot hope to change this. The problem, then, is to find occupation for the spinsters who are the product of these circumstances,—occupation which shall be complementary to man's work, not competitive with it. There is no possibility of this at present; for the work of the unmarried woman must first become productive if it is to be useful to society and satisfying to herself. In what would the productive work of the unmarried woman consist?

It must be rooted in the fulfilment of her mother vocation, in the setting free of her motherly feeling, if not in the flesh, then in the mind and soul.

Among the many who do not become mothers, there is always a small elect body who voluntarily and early renounce a life of happiness for themselves in order to devote themselves wholly and entirely to a life for others. This they can only do in an isolated and individual fashion.

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Our time has no institutions for this purpose. In the Middle Ages there were plenty of them, but they fell with the economic system upon which they were founded. Since those times we have the everlasting impoverishment of whole classes of the people and whole districts. No rise in wages can help them up; no State assistance guide them, no amount of private charity prove effectual; they are those individuals and classes which fall away from the united interests of the existing social structure. They spread themselves among the social-democratic and trades-union associations and form the sediment of the large cities and merge into the endless "deserving poor" and the undeserving criminal class; but the student of human nature and brother of mankind asks where the blame begins and ends. Innocent culpables are the majority of the depraved, the idle and the criminal; sacrifices to the form of society and to sudden social and economic changes. They exist in the country, in the industrial districts, in the mining regions, as well as in the crowded cities. And to the same fate are destined the children which they bear.

## WOMAN'S PRODUCTIVE WORK

The State has shown itself in, competent to furnish with employment, to provide for, or to "elevate" these classes. Shelters, night-asylums, soup-kitchens and laborers' colonies, do not work. Something more is needed; something which seems to have disappeared in our day, but which nevertheless is swelling everywhere so strongly that sooner or later it will burst the weakening crust of self-seeking in our hearts; the feeling, "I cannot enjoy, so long as my brother hungers; I cannot be happy while, in my sister, my flesh and blood weeps; I cannot caress my children and see another mother's children near by starve or go to ruin."

There will always be women who early and voluntarily renounce life for themselves to live in the lives of others, because of the very nature of women, which is enthusiastic, and because of that still deeper feeling in the substance of the women: None of us lives unto herself; we are but vessels, bearers of others' contents; we carry our own or others' fruit.

Here is the sphere in which a mighty work of organization, the reëstablish-

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ment of society, may be carried on; a work which till now has always failed, whether undertaken by the State or by private individuals, because it requires entire and limitless devotion of the individual and strictly administered and exact organization of brotherhoods and sisterhoods; because also it demands large capital. For the money, we need have no fear. Great donations are constantly being made for such senseless missions as plainly indicate the perplexity of the giver,—“What shall I do with my money?” Moreover one of the singular characteristics of our time is the complete scattering of gigantic fortunes such as were unknown in earlier times. To obtain possession of the capital of these childless rich people, and use it for the benefit of the needy, or in other words to allow the innocently or guiltily acquired plunder to flow back to the plundered and so expiate a part of the crime which this heaping up of wealth denotes,—that would be a task which increasing numbers would enter into, both now and in the future, some as givers, others as administrators.

There is still an utter lack of institutions fitted to carry on such an undertaking.

## WOMAN'S PRODUCTIVE WORK

We lack organizations which could give such institutions life and permanency. They must consist of systematized organizations, from those of extremest austerity to those of utmost mildness, according to the difficulties and requirements of the office to be fulfilled and the grade sustained. One thing must be excluded from all other grades; the trifling pretension of all idle charity.

The poor girl who has to choose between murdering her illegitimate child at birth, or letting it slowly languish and die "under foster care," an outcast from society, from whom the wives and daughters of the better classes chastely turn away their pure glances, should stand nearest to the altar of the Virgin and Child; over her may the Mother of God first spread her mantle, and may the first symbol of the universal motherhood of women be raised in her service. Let the devotion of the chosen feminine youth who will set themselves apart for human service be dedicated to these children who would else be murdered or allowed to perish. Let it be a sisterhood of life with all its horrors—no cloister service or young ladies' club—which shall spread

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from land to land in countless branches. Here, in these institutions the woman-physician may work free from competition with the man; woman may conduct the apothecary shops, may climb to the highest administrative positions, manage telephone, telegraph, postal and book-keeping departments; nurse the women, care for the children, rearing and instructing them, educate the young girls, and finally, establish in the places of old civilizations now run to waste, colonies of working-people, colonies in which all that is unqualified to endure will of itself perish, and all that is qualified, become doubly so. To these mother-institutions, countless others would be added. Hospitals, kitchens for the poor, all manner of nursing institutions, organized labor intelligence of the care of the poor might grow up from such a root.

The woman who devotes herself wholly to the service of others enjoys, at least in civilized lands, protection and veneration, even among the lower classes. These sisterhoods should be austere to themselves; to measure the morality of others and require an equal return for the good they do, this is not their business.

## WOMAN'S PRODUCTIVE WORK

It is still less their business to plague the people for whom they provide food and shelter with singing and praying, preaching, and the demands of the confessional. They must be sisters among sisters, each chosen with a sure psychological view to fitness for her position, from the most gifted to the very humblest member; they must be colonizers in the wilderness of civilization, those of less means and less abilities achieving a certain work, the women of higher rank or endowments fulfilling a life-mission, bound to celibacy by their calling, like every woman in a bread-winning trade.

This may seem a dream, and yet only a few decades perhaps and the dream becomes a reality. There was once a time when the institutions for the service of humanity were mild and full of compassion, but the hearts were hard; it needed fearful pressure and unheard-of threats to move them. Now the hearts are tender and willing, the officials' cruelties are done away with and private ones are rare. No one now looks upon the sufferings of his neighbor with enjoyment, and the descendants of those who stimulated themselves by cruelties are gone. Sel-

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fishness has been refined; the injustice which is now done, the defrauding which takes place, must seek direct ways. No one wishes to see the misery for which he is to blame. The tortures which we now prepare for one another arise chiefly from misunderstandings and antagonism, coming from insufficient knowledge. We must go back again to instinct, or rather we must go forward to a finer instinct, for instinct is the basis of all psychology. And psychology is not only a science of knowledge; it is an offspring of the nerves and feeling. A period of thought which has lasted four hundred years, has now gone by; a period of feeling is approaching, and with it comes the time of the woman.

11/12/15















O woman lovely woman  
Nature made you  
To temper men who had  
been brutes without you  
Angels are painted faces  
to look like you  
There is in you all that  
we believe of heaven -

